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FAME AND FORTUNE

STORIES OF BOYS WEEKLY WHO MAKE MONEY.



Before the boy knew what was going to happen to him, Jackson suddenly threw a cloth over his head and pulled him backward. He tried to grasp his assailant, but Harding prevented that by stepping forward and seizing his wrists.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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GOING THE LIMIT

OR,

A BIG RISK FOR BIG MONEY

(A WALL STREET STORY.)

By A SELF-MADE MAN

HENRY J. KLING,
A COMPLETE ASSORTMENT OF ALL THE
LEADING MAGAZINES AND PERIODICALS
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CHAPTER I.

BOB AND HIS SISTER.

"Why, hello, Nellie, what brings you here at this time of the day, and why do you look so solemn?" asked Bob Carson, messenger for Edward Fitzball, broker, of No. — Wall Street, to a pretty, bright-eyed lady, about a year older than himself, who had just entered the office.

Nellie was his sister, and an expert stenographer, who had been working for Nathan Copley, an Exchange Place broker, for the past six months.

"I've left my position, Bob," replied the girl.

"What, left Copley?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because I couldn't stand being made love to by Mr. Copley—a man old enough to be my father," replied Nellie, with an indignant look.

"You mean your grandfather. So he's been at it again, eh?"

"Again? He has hardly ceased to annoy during the last four months; but lately his attentions have become so pointed that I just couldn't stand them. To-day he actually had the nerve to propose to me."

"The dickens he did," chuckled Bob.

"I don't see anything to laugh at," said Nellie, with a pout.

"I do. The idea of that old geezer proposing to a girl of your age. I should like to have seen how he managed it. Did he get down on his knees?"

"No, he didn't," cried Nellie, a bit sharply.

"How did he pull off the trick?"

"I think it's real mean of you to make fun of me," said the girl, looking as if she wanted to cry.

"Don't get mad, Nellie. I only wanted to learn how he behaved."

"Mis-behaved, you mean. He pushed his chair up against mine and tried to put his arm around my waist. I was so indignant that I—I slapped his face."

"You did?"

"I did, and good, too. Then I jumped up, left the room, put on my hat and left the office. I came straight here to tell you about it."

"I guess you served him right, Nellie. The old orang-outang had no right to make love to you. That wasn't what he hired you for. It was quite proper for you to cut loose from him under the circumstances. He owes you four days' pay. I'll go around to his office and collect it for you, for, of course, you wouldn't care to go back and demand it yourself."

"I certainly would not, much as we need the money. It's too bad I am out of work, for mother depends on both of us to turn in our wages. I must try and get another position right away."

"Oh, there's no great rush. We won't starve because you're not working."

"But mother will be sure to fall behind in the rent."

"No, she won't. I'll see that she gets that, and anything else she needs."

"How can you when you only get eight dollars a week? I made twelve myself."

"Sis, can you keep a secret?"

"Of course I can. What is the secret?" asked the girl, curiously.

"You promise not to tell mother?"

"That will depend," replied Nellie.

"On what?"

"Whether it's right I shouldn't tell her."

"If I've kept it from her, and from you, too, for weeks, there is nothing improper about it."

"Well, tell me."

"I've been speculating in the stock market for the last six months, on the quiet, and I've made quite a little wad of money."

"Is that true?"

"So help me bob, it is."

"Now, aren't you the mean boy not to tell us?"

"No, I'm not mean. I have an object."

"What is it?"

"To surprise mother with a good-sized roll by and by. I intended to surprise you, too, but now the cat is out of the bag."

"You have surprised me. How much have you got? As much as fifty or sixty dollars?"

"Fifty or sixty donkeys! What's fifty or sixty dollars? I'm worth \$600."

"What! Six hundred dollars!" almost screamed the girl.

"That's what I said."

"I don't believe it."

"That's fierce, for a fellow's only sister to call him a prevaricator. I've got the money all right."

"I'd like to see it."

"I can't show you the cash just now, but I can show you a certificate of deposit on the little bank on Nassau street where I put my deals through. You know what a certificate of deposit is when you see it, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Feast your eyes on that," and Bob drew a paper from his pocket and showed it to his sister.

As it bore the lithographed form of the bank, and was filled out in Bob's name, his sister could not doubt its genuineness.

"Oh, Bob, why didn't you give mother some of this money? You know she needs it," said Nellie.

"I've only just made the greater part of it on a lucky deal I closed out three days ago. I was thinking about handing her \$100, but I was afraid she'd ask me where I go so much money, and I didn't want to give my secret away to her yet."

"Well, you could give her \$25, and tell her you made it in stocks. She won't ask any questions, she'll be so glad to get it. Then in a little while you can give her another \$25, and tell her the same story. Now that I'm out of work she'll need the money badly."

"I told you not to worry about the rest, or anything else. I mean to make more money with the capital I've got now, but, of course, I won't let mother go short of anything she needs. Say, sis, I've got an idea," said Bob, suddenly. "Do you know I think it'll be just the thing for you."

"What is it?"

"Johnson, the patent man upstairs, remarked yesterday

in my hearing that somebody ought to start a public stenographer's office in this building. He says he hasn't enough work to hire a girl steady, and there are many like him in the house. He has to send out for a girl to come in and take dictation, and the others have to do the same. This is rather expensive, considering the amount of work to be done, as the girl's time is charged up from the moment she leaves her office till she gets back again. And then there are messenger charges. In my opinion it is just as cheap to have a girl even if she is only partly employed, but everybody hasn't room for a girl. Now there's a small room for rent on the seventh floor. Suppose I take it for you, furnish it with a rug, a desk or table, as you prefer, several chairs, and such other things as you may think necessary, have your name painted on the door, with the words 'Public Stenographer' underneath, with suitable office hours, and get some cards printed to circulate throughout the building? You would probably build up a business for yourself that would pay you more money than you'd get working for an employer, and you'd be your own boss, and stand in no danger of anybody making love to you. What do you think of the idea? I think it first-class. You're an A 1 stenographer, and it seems to me you're sure to succeed. At any rate, I'm willing to back you till you get on your feet."

Nellie was delighted with her brother's suggestion.

"I could visit the small offices in the building where no stenographers are employed, leave my card, and say I'd work at a reasonable figure," she said.

"Sure you could. I'll hire the room for you this afternoon after I get off and then buy the furniture. You can rent a machine for \$3 a month, and afterward, if you buy the typewriter, the rent will be allowed on the purchase price."

Nellie felt in quite a flutter when her brother put the matter right up to her for immediate action.

She was so enthusiastic over it that she told Bob to go ahead and do it.

"I'll have the room ready for you to-morrow, and you can start in canvassing for work as soon as you get your business cards, which ought to be ready by to-morrow noon. Now go home, tell your mother how you came to throw up your job, and then tell her that a good friend of yours—you needn't give me away in the matter—is going to start you up in the public stenographer's business, and that you feel sure you will make more money at it than working for another boss."

Nellie said that she would, and the cashier calling Bob to his desk at that moment, his sister took her departure, feeling a whole lot better than when she entered Mr. Fitzball's office.

CHAPTER II.

NELLIE CARSON MAKES A SUCCESSFUL START.

Bob was as good as his word.

He rented the room on the seventh floor that afternoon, and then, after leaving an order for a couple of hundred cards with a printer, went up on Nassau street and bought a writing table and three chairs.

He got a nice rug for the floor at another store, and also purchased four water color pictures for the walls.

He arranged with a sign painter to decorate the door with his sister's name and business, and finally rented a typewriter of the make Nellie was accustomed to.

When he got home he handed his mother \$25, and told her he had made it out of the stock market.

All this expenditure, including a month's rent of the office, reduced Bob's capital about \$150; but he didn't mind that, for he had his sister's interest at heart, and if she made a success of the venture it was bound to help the family.

She was a smart girl, with nerve enough to canvass business for herself, and she started in at once as soon as she got her business cards.

Before three o'clock she had secured half a dozen steady customers in the building, and other gentlemen kept her card and promised to consider her application for work.

Bob, being busy with his own duties, did not see her until after he finished for the day, when he took the elevator up to the seventh floor to see if she was in her office.

She was, and busy at her typewriter.

"I see you've got something to do, sis," he said, as he seated himself beside her.

"Yes, this work is for a gentleman on this floor," she replied. "It's in a hurry, so don't talk to me until I finish it."

"I'll go out and get a little lunch and come back again," he said.

Inside of half an hour he was back, and he brought with him a book for his sister to keep a record of her work in.

Then she told him that she had done quite a bit of work since one o'clock.

While they were conversing, a gentleman from the floor above came in and asked if she could take some dictation from him, as he had several letters he wanted done.

"Certainly," she replied.

He took a chair and began talking off what he wanted typewritten, after handing her the necessary letter sheets bearing his name and business, and as many envelopes to be addressed.

Bob took advantage of the chance to go around to Nathan Copley's office to collect what was due his sister.

"Isn't Miss Carson coming back?" asked the book-keeper, when he explained his errand.

"No, sir, she isn't," replied Bob promptly.

"Mr. Copley thinks she is."

"He's got another think coming then."

"Who are you, may I ask?"

"I just told you that I'm her brother."

"Because you say you are doesn't make it so," replied the book-keeper.

"There's some evidence of the fact," said Bob, showing him a letter addressed to himself, care of Edward Fitzball.

"You might have picked that up on the street."

"I might, but I didn't. Are you going to give me her money?"

"No. She must come around and get it herself."

"She won't come around for it."

"Why not?"

"Because she's had all she wants of this office."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I'll never tell you, but if you're anxious to know, you'd better ask Mr. Copley. He knows why my sister left."

"Did she have a row with him?"

"Get your information from Mr. Copley."

"He didn't tell me she was discharged."

"She wasn't discharged. She left of her own accord."

"I don't see what the trouble could have been. She seemed a nice girl."

"She is a nice girl. The finest in the city."

"If she's looking for another position she'll want a reference from Mr. Copley. She can ask him for it when she calls for her money."

"She doesn't want any reference from Mr. Copley. She's at work now."

"Is that so? She got a job pretty quick."

"Are you going to pay me or will I have to call again?"

"I can't pay without instructions from Mr. Copley. I know he expects her back. I'll have to tell him that you told me she has another situation."

"I didn't say she had another situation. I said she had work. She has opened an office for herself."

"Opened an office for herself?"

"Yes. She's started as a public stenographer."

"Whereabouts?"

"I'd prefer not to say where her office is."

"Why so?"

"For reasons. You can tell Mr. Copley I will call tomorrow for her money, and that I expect to get it."

"All right; I'll tell him."

Bob then returned to his sister's office, found her waiting for him, and reported the interview he had had with Copley's book-keeper.

"Are you through for the day, sis?"

"Yes."

"Then we'll go home," he said.

Next morning Bob, in looking over the previous day's market report, saw that A. & B. stock was going up.

He decided that it was a good chance to make a few dollars, so at the first chance that morning he went around to the little bank and bought 40 shares of it on the usual ten percent. margin.

It was bought at 82, as he subsequently found out.

When he visited his sister again that afternoon he told her that he was in the market again.

"I do hope you'll be fortunate, Bob," she said. "It would be dreadful if you lost all your money."

"I never look on the shady side of the picture, sis."

"That's very well, but I've been long enough in Wall street to understand how risky it is to speculate in stocks," said his sister.

"Yet I have made \$600 at the game."

"That is because you have been fortunate. You cannot expect luck will always run your way."

"No matter. I hope to make a few dollars on this new deal. How did you get on to-day?"

"Splendid. I've been quite busy."

"My idea was a good one, don't you think?"

"Yes. I liked it the moment you mentioned it. Of course, I couldn't have done anything if you hadn't been so good as to start me."

"For which favor I trust you are sufficiently grateful."

"I am indeed, brother dear. You're the best brother in the world."

"I'm glad to hear it; but by and by you'll find some other girl's brother you'll like better."

"Indeed I won't."

"Ho! I know better."

"And how about yourself? Some day you'll find another girl you'll like a great deal better than me."

"I won't deny that. But that's a long time in the future. You'll probably be married before then, and won't care."

"Married, indeed! Why, I haven't got a beau yet."

"Yes, you have. Old man Copley is dead gone on you," grinned Bob.

"I wish you wouldn't mention him."

"I'm glad I mentioned him, for it puts me in mind that I told his book-keeper yesterday I would call for your money this afternoon, and I had forgotten all about it. Wait till I come back and we'll go home together."

Thus speaking, Bob left Nellie's office.

When he made his appearance in Copley's office the book-keeper nodded to him.

"Here's a full week's wages for your sister," he said.

"Please sign that receipt. Mr. Copley says he is sorry to lose Miss Carson, and he hopes she will be successful in the business she has taken up."

Bob said nothing, but receipted for the money, thanked the book-keeper for it, and walked out.

CHAPTER III.

THE YOUNG MAN FROM CHICAGO.

"Bob," said Mr. Fitzball, on the following afternoon, just after the boy had returned from the bank where he had gone, as was his daily custom, to deposit a bunch of checks and cash, "I've got an errand for you to execute for me this evening."

"This evening, sir?" replied Bob, in surprise, for this was something new.

"Yes. It's unusual, but necessary," replied the broker.

"All right, sir. I'm ready to do anything you want."

"Here is a package I want you to take up to the house of George Brown, one of my customers. It contains five United States \$1,000 4's coupon bonds. You must be careful of the bundle, for, as I suppose you know, such bonds are negotiable on sight, and it would be almost the same as losing cash to lose them."

"I'll take good care of the package, sir."

"Take it. Mr. Brown's address is written on it, and you ought to have no difficulty in reaching his house. You can go home now."

Bob put the packet in his pocket, got his hat, but instead of going home, went upstairs to his sister's office.

The door was locked, but there was a notice on it to the effect that she would be back in fifteen minutes, so he stood around the corridor until she appeared shortly with some papers in her hands.

"I've got quite a bunch of work to do by five o'clock,"

she said, as she unlocked the door, "so there isn't any use of waiting for me this afternoon."

Bob followed her inside, took possession of a chair, and pulling out the package of bonds, looked at the address on it.

He saw that Mr. Brown lived up in the Bronx, and that the street was not familiar to him.

"I've got to carry this up in the Bronx after supper this evening," he said.

"After supper!" exclaimed his sister. "Why don't you go now? It's only a little after three."

Mr. Fitzball told me to take it up this evening, so I judge that the gentleman will not be home till then," he answered.

"Whereabouts in the Bronx are you going?"

"Blessed if I know. I'll have to look in the street directory to find out."

After remaining a short time, Bob left to consult a street directory of Greater New York.

He learned what he wanted, but still was rather in the dark as to the exact location of Mr. Brown's house.

"I can find it by making some inquiries," he thought.

Then he went home.

Immediately after supper he started on his mission.

Having ascertained the station on the elevated road at which he must get off, he did not bother himself further till he reached that point and descended to the street.

He entered a drug store and inquired the most direct way of reaching the corner of Blank and — streets.

"— street," said the clerk, "is the third one from this corner. Follow it for nine or ten blocks and you'll come to Blank street."

"Thanks," said Bob. "It's easier to reach than I thought."

He started on his way at a lively gait, for he was anxious to get rid of his valuable packet as soon as possible.

It didn't take him long to reach — street, and he turned into it.

Near Third avenue this street had many apartment houses, but after he had gone on three or four blocks he came to rows of two-family houses, all built very much alike.

After passing the fifth block the houses were not so plentiful, many unimproved lots being interspersed here and there.

He had reached the seventh corner, and was congratulating himself on the speedy end of his mission when he overtook a well-dressed young fellow, three or four years his senior, going in the same direction.

As he was passing him the young man seized him by the arm.

"Beg your pardon," he said. "Are you acquainted around here?"

"No," replied Bob, "I'm not."

"That's a pity," replied the other, releasing his grip.

"Why so?" asked Bob.

"Because I'm looking for my uncle's house, and I was in hopes you might be able to direct me."

"I'm sorry. I never was up this way before. I'm on an errand to a gentleman's residence or I wouldn't be here now. Haven't you any idea where your uncle lives?"

"Yes, he lives at No. —Blank street, but I haven't the least idea where Blank street is."

"Why, that's the number I'm bound for. Is the gentleman's name Brown?"

"Yes—George Brown."

"Then you come with me and I'll take you right there," said Bob.

"You know where his house is, then?"

"No; but I know that Blank street is about three blocks from here, and if the city directory is correct, as I'm sure it is, Mr. Brown's house is somewhere on the block between this street and the next one north."

"It's fortunate that I met you, though, as you say Blank street is only three blocks ahead, I would have reached it all right."

"You haven't visited your uncle before, then?" said Bob, as they walked on together. "Are you a stranger in New York?"

"Yes; I've just arrived from Chicago."

"I suppose I ought to introduce myself as we are both bound for the same place," said Bob. "My name is Bob Carson."

"Glad to know you, Carson. My name is Guy Stanford."

They shook hands.

"You are well acquainted with my uncle, I suppose," went on Stanford.

"No, I don't know him."

"Don't know him!" exclaimed the young man from Chicago, in some surprise. "Yet you are about to visit him. Or perhaps it's his ward, Miss Bessie Dale, you are calling on?" and Stanford looked hard at his companion.

"I'm not acquainted with any of the family. My visit is simply a business one. My employer sent me up with an important package to deliver to your uncle."

"An important package, eh?" said Stanford, with a sharp look. "Where are you employed?"

"In Wall Street."

"Ah, indeed; and your employer is a banker, I suppose?"

"No, he's a stock broker."

"May I ask his name?"

"Edward Fitzball."

"Some stock my uncle has purchased, I presume?"

"Not exactly. The package contains bonds."

Stanford remained silent for a few moments, by which time they reached the corner of Blank street.

It was rather a dark street on account of the many trees which obscured the glow of the street lamps.

Bob was not sure which side of the street the house he was bound for was on, so to determine the matter he ran up the steps of the corner residence and looked for the number.

He failed to find the number displayed, either on the door or the inner fanlight, so he tried the next house, but with no better success.

"I think there ought to be a law or an ordinance compelling house owners to show the number of their houses so that a person could see it," he said.

"I agree with you," replied Stanford. "Try the next house."

Bob did so without result.

They reached the middle of the block before they found a number visible to their eyes.

With that number Bob was able to determine, in a general way, the location of George Brown's residence, which was on the opposite side of the street.

They crossed over, and found that numbers were just as scarce there.

"I'm going to make inquiries at this house," said Bob. He ascended the stoop and rang the bell.

A gentleman answered the ring.

"Can you tell me in which of these houses Mr. George Brown lives?" Bob asked.

"The fourth house from here," was the reply.

"Thank you. Sorry I was obliged to trouble you, sir," and with a bow the boy returned to the sidewalk. "I know the house now," he said to his companion.

"Glad to hear it," answered Stanford.

"This is it," said Bob, when they came to the fourth house.

A neatly dressed servant answered his ring.

"Is Mr. George Brown in?" asked Bob.

"He stepped out a few minutes ago, but will return shortly. Are you the boy from Wall Street he expects?" asked the servant.

"Yes. I'm from Wall Street."

"Walk in, please."

"This is Mr. Brown's neph——"

"I'll introduce myself," interrupted Stanford, somewhat curtly.

The servant showed them into the parlor.

At the back of the parlor the curtains were looped up, showing the interior of Mr. Brown's library, where the gas was turned low.

It was furnished with a handsome rug, a desk, book cases full of books, and a safe.

Over the desk hung the picture of a very pretty, golden-haired girl of perhaps sixteen years.

Bob, not relishing his companion's remark when he started to introduce him to the servant as the nephew of Mr. Brown, remained silent.

Guy Stanford did not speak either.

Every few moments he cast a furtive look at Bob.

Finally he got up, walked nervously to the front window and looked out.

The street was deserted.

He glanced sharply up and down it, at the same time fumbling in one of his pockets.

Turning around, he walked right up to Bob.

"I don't see any sign of my uncle coming," he said. "If you are in a hurry you can leave that package you brought with me, and I will hand it to Mr. Brown when he comes."

"I'm in no special hurry," replied Bob. "Much obliged for your offer, but I am responsible for that package, and can only give it to Mr. Brown himself."

"Is it very valuable, then?"

"Bonds naturally are valuable."

"What kind of bonds are they?"

"You'll have to excuse me answering that question," said Bob, rather surprised at his companion's nerve.

"I want to know," replied Stanford, sharply.

"You'll have to get your information from your uncle, then."

"Will I?"

His arm went up suddenly, and Bob caught the glint of some kind of weapon in his hand.

He sprang back, startled and surprised, to avoid the impending blow.

Stanford, however, seized him by the arm, as he struck at him.

Bob felt a stunning blow on the side of his head.

His senses reeled under it, and, after a feeble attempt to save himself, he fell to the floor unconscious.

CHAPTER IV.

UNCLE AND NEPHEW.

After a hurried glance at the door leading into the hall, the young man from Chicago bent down and began rifling the young messenger's pockets.

The packet of bonds quickly came to light, and after a rapid glance at the address upon it, he thrust it into his pocket.

From another pocket he pulled a couple of dollar bills which he appropriated.

At that moment his sharp ears detected the rattle of a key in the hall door.

He quickly shoved Bob under the sofa on which he had been sitting, and sat down himself.

A fine looking gentleman entered the house and came into the parlor.

As he walked straight for the library, Stanford got up and confronted him.

"How do you do, Uncle George?" he said, suavely.

Mr. Brown stopped, stared at his visitor, and recognizing him, said coolly:

"So it's you, Guy Stanford. What brings you here?"

"Oh, I just thought I'd pay you a visit," replied Stanford, coolly. "Sorry that you do not seem glad to see me. I was hoping that you'd kill the fatted calf in honor of my coming, but I see I overrated the warmth of your reception."

"I thought I told you never to visit me again?" replied Mr. Brown, in a still colder tone.

"I admit that you said something to that effect, but you see blood is stronger than water, and so——"

"Blood!" answered the gentleman, angrily. "You have certainly proved yourself an honor to the family."

The sarcasm of the last sentence was quite lost on his visitor.

"Don't hit a fellow when he's down," said Stanford, in a laughing tone.

A look of angry disgust crossed Mr. Brown's face.

"I have no wish to continue this interview," he said.

"You are a disgrace to the family, so the sooner you return whence you came the better pleased I shall be."

"You're very hard on me. Remember, please, that I'm the only son of your dead sister."

A spasm swept over the gentleman's features.

"Would I could forget that her blood flows in your veins.

Only for the fact that you are her son you would be in the State prison—a fate you richly deserve."

"Do I look like a felon? I should fancy not."

"Looks are deceptive in your case. The word rascal may not be apparent in your handsome countenance, but it is written in bold characters on your heart."

"Thank you for the compliment, uncle," replied the young man, with an irritating laugh.

"I don't wish you to call me uncle. I decline that honor," cried the gentleman, angrily.

"The fact remains that I am your nephew whether you care to acknowledge it or not," returned the visitor.

"I wish to know the object of your visit," said Mr. Brown, curtly.

"Well, the object of my visit is money. I wish to negotiate a loan with you that will carry me over until things brighten with me."

"You will get no further pecuniary assistance from me. I thought I made that plain to you when we last met."

"I hope you will reconsider your determination, for I need money badly. I am over head and heels in debt, and I can't extricate myself without help."

"You'll get none from me. I am through with you for good."

"You mean that, do you?"

"I do. Now I'll trouble you to go and never darken my door again."

"Can I see Bessie before I go?"

"No!" roared Mr. Brown, with fierce emphasis. "How dare you ask to see her after——"

His voice choked up with passion, while his eyes flashed fire.

"Leave my house this instant, do you hear?" he added, grasping his nephew by the arm and essaying to force him out of the room.

At that moment there was a movement under the sofa, but it escaped the attention of the two actors on the scene.

Guy Stanford resisted his uncle's efforts to eject him, and they were soon engaged in a rough scuffle.

The young man shook himself loose and ran into the library.

Mr. Brown lost no time in following him there.

The noise they made was heard upstairs by a very pretty, golden-haired girl who was reading in the sitting-room.

She started up and listened.

Suddenly she dropped the book with a look of alarm on her features and ran to the head of the stairs.

The sounds came plainer to her there.

"There's something wrong in the library," she murmured. "I must see what it is."

She instantly tripped downstairs.

In the meantime Bob Carson had recovered his senses and realized where he was.

He soon discovered that there were two persons in the parlor, and that they were engaged in a kind of wordy scrap.

He listened and overheard enough of the talk to understand that the persons were the young man from Chicago, who had attacked and knocked him out with some kind of a blunt weapon, and the gentleman he had called to see and deliver the package of bonds to.

He also saw that the young fellow was in decidedly bad flavor with Mr. Brown, and he did not wonder at it after what had happened to him through the young man's agency.

Guy Stanford, as he had said his name was, seemed to be a hard case.

In fact, he had demonstrated the fact beyond a doubt. When the interview ended in a personal struggle between the gentleman of the house and his nephew, Bob decided it was time for him to extricate himself from his uncomfortable position under the sofa, where he knew he had been shoved by Stanford.

But before making that move his suspicions made him feel for the valuable packet which had been intrusted to him by his employer.

It was gone as he had feared.

Clearly he had been robbed by the young rascal from Chicago.

As soon as he discovered the fact he hastened to get out from under the sofa.

While he was doing so, Brown grabbed his graceless nephew once more as he stood at bay, with a wicked look on his face, in the library.

"Come, get out of my house, you scoundrel," cried the gentleman. "If you ever come back I'll hand you over to the police and let you reap the reward you so richly deserve."

"Give me \$500 and I'll never trouble you again," said Stanford.

"Not a cent—not a cent, do you understand?" cried his enraged uncle.

It was at that moment that Bob crawled out from underneath the sofa, and the young lady, whose name was Bessie Dale, appeared at the parlor door.

"Then if you won't give it to me I'll take what I can get, and give you a receipt in full for your hard words. Take that," and Stanford struck at his uncle with the same weapon he had used on Bob.

The blow took effect on the gentleman's head, and he staggered back with the blood streaming from a gash on his forehead.

Bessie uttered a thrilling scream and rushed forward as Stanford followed Mr. Brown with his arm raised to repeat the blow.

Bob, however, sprang ahead of her and caught the descending arm of the young man in time to save the gentleman.

With a snarl of angry consternation Stanford closed with the young messenger, and a desperate struggle ensued between them.

Mr. Brown would have fallen but for Bessie, who caught and supported him in her arms.

"Send for the police," said Mr. Brown, as soon as he collected his senses.

Then he looked at his nephew and the boy with whom he was struggling.

"Who is this person, and when did he come in?" he said, for he had never seen Bob before.

"I don't know, guardy. I saw him come out from under the sofa."

"From under the sofa?"

"Yes, guardy, and he saved you from being struck a second time by——"

She stopped suddenly, for she had recognized Stanford and did not care to utter his name.

At that juncture Bob succeeded in tripping Stanford up, and they both fell to the floor, Bob on top.

The young messenger grabbed the slung-shot the rascal held in his hand and wrenched it out of his grasp.

"Now lie still or I'll put you to sleep," he said, putting from his exertions.

Stanford lay still and glared up at him.

Mr. Brown, wiping the blood from his face with his handkerchief, stepped forward and looked down at them.

"Bessie," he said, "go downstairs and bring me a piece of rope of some kind. Young man," he went on, addressing Bob, who he saw was well dressed and respectable looking, as Bessie left the room on her errand, "I don't know who you are, nor what errand brought you here, but you have rendered me a great favor in subduing that young rascal you have hold of, and I thank you for it."

"You are evidently Mr. George Brown," replied Bob. "My name is Bob Carson. I came here to-night to hand you a package of United States bonds intrusted to me by my employer, Edward Fitzball, of No. —— Wall Street."

While speaking Bob did not take his eyes nor his attention off Stanford, who he knew would take instant advantage of any lack of watchfulness on his part.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Brown. "I was expecting you. When did you come?"

"I came with this chap, whom I met on —— street, three blocks from here. He told me that his name was Guy Stanford, and that he was a nephew of yours. He was looking for your house, at least he said he was, though he had the number and the street all right. We were admitted together by the servant and shown into the parlor. I had foolishly told him the nature of my errand here, and while waiting for you to return he asked me to tell him the kind of bonds I had brought with me. When I declined to do so he struck me with this slung-shot—the same weapon that he used on you—and that is all I remember till I came to my senses under the sofa in the parlor, and heard you and he engaged in an altercation, which ended in his attack upon you in this room."

"Your explanation is quite satisfactory, young man, and I thank you again for your timely interference, which may have even saved my life from that graceless young ruffian, whom I blush to acknowledge as a relative."

"You are welcome, sir. While you are waiting for the rope you sent for, I wish you would search your nephew's pockets."

"Search his pockets!"

"Yes. After knocking me senseless he took that packet of bonds from me. As you know its value, I guess you'd better get possession of it as soon as possible and relieve me of the responsibility."

Mr. Brown was clearly of Bob's way of thinking, for he lost no time in searching Stanford's clothes, and soon found the package in question.

Bessie then appeared with a piece of clothes line, with which Mr. Brown bound his nephew while Bob held him.

The young lady regarded the young messenger with not a little curiosity, for she saw that her guardian was on a

friendly footing with him, which assured her that the stranger must have given satisfactory explanation of his presence in the house.

She also noted that Bob was good looking and manly, which predisposed her toward him.

As soon as Guy Stanford was rendered helpless, Mr. Brown introduced Bob to the girl, representing her as his ward.

He then told the boy to follow him upstairs to the bathroom, where he would have the facilities for washing the wound he had received, and brushing his clothes.

While Bob was attending to himself Bessie got a towel and warm water, and fixed up her guardian's hurt as best she could.

After examining the bonds that the boy had brought he signed the receipt for them, and then Bob took his departure.

When he was gone Mr. Brown had an interview with his nephew, and on his promise to leave the city, gave him \$100 and let him go.

Guy Stanford, however, did not intend to leave New York, for he was not through with his uncle, and furthermore he intended to get square with Bob Carson.

CHAPTER V.

AN AGED ADMIRER.

As Bob had promised Mr. Brown to keep the affair at his house a secret, he said nothing to his mother or sister about it when he got home.

They could not help noticing the cut on the side of his head, but he passed it off as an accident, and made light of it.

He was also silent at the office when he handed the receipt for the bonds to Mr. Fitzball.

During the day he noticed that his A. & B. stock had gone up a point, and that made him feel good.

When the Exchange closed at three it had advanced another half point.

As soon as he got off for the day he went to a lunch house and got a sandwich and cup of coffee, after which he called on his sister and found that business was improving.

"Well, sis," he said, "that stock I went into is up a point and a half above what I gave for it."

"How much are you ahead, then?"

"Oh, something over \$50."

"How much higher do you think it will go?"

"Haven't the least idea, but I believe it's good for five points the way the general market looks at present."

"I hope you will realize your expectations with regard to it, but I don't like the idea of you speculating with your little money."

"Nothing ventured nothing won. I know more than one messenger who has made several thousand dollars out of lucky ventures in the market."

"Don't you know of others who have lost their money in the same way?"

"I admit I do."

"And don't you know that more people lose than win in Wall Street?"

"That's true enough."

"That ought to be a warning to you."

"It's a warning to me to be careful. Come on, let's go home."

Next day while Bob was on his way to the Exchange with a rush message, he saw a young man standing on the corner of Nassau street, where the sub-treasury building is, who looked so like Guy Stanford that he took a second look at him.

"I wonder if that can be the rascal?" he said to himself. "I thought his uncle intended to hand him over to the police. He must have relented for family reasons and let him go. It's a good thing that he didn't make his escape from the house with that package of bonds, or I'd have been in a lot of trouble over it. Mr. Brown could have held my boss responsible, I guess, as he could have shown that I never handed him the package. However, it turned out all right, by good luck. I hope I won't run against that Chicago chap again, for it is probable that he has no kindly feelings toward me."

Bob dashed into the Exchange and then forgot all about Stanford.

When the young messenger started back to the office, Stanford was still on the corner, but was not alone now.

He was talking to a tall, well-dressed man with a silk hat.

Bob passed on and reported to the cashier.

He had something else to think about beside the Chicago scamp.

One of the things was the rise of another point in his stock.

"I guess I made no mistake in getting in on A. & B." he thought. "I'd give something to know when I ought to sell out to the best advantage."

That was a problem that bothered more heads than his own.

It is a simple matter to buy stock, with the hope of a substantial rise; but the great point is to figure out when to get out to the best advantage.

No ordinary speculator can guess, with any degree of certainty, when the market will turn and go the other way, leaving him minus his anticipated profits, with probably a loss to boot.

Two days later A. & B. was up to 87.3-8, and at that figure Bob decided to sell out, and take no more chances on it going higher.

An opportunity coming his way to reach the little bank, he went there and closed out his deal.

He had reason to congratulate himself on getting out when he did, for that afternoon A. & B. went down a couple of points, and though it recovered some on the following day, it did not go up as high as 87 again.

Bob's profits amounted to \$200, and he received his sister's congratulations on his good fortune.

In settling with the bank he took a certificate of deposit for \$600, and \$55 in cash.

He handed his mother \$50 that evening, telling her he had just completed another lucky deal in the market.

His sister, at the end of her second week in business, reported that she had earned during the ten days \$56.

"Now, Bob, I want to pay you something on account of what I owe you for starting me," she said.

"You want to do nothing of the kind," he replied. "Your time is worth say \$15 per week. You'll have to save \$12.50 a week for your rent, and your sundry expenses you can put at \$2.50. That makes \$5 a day. All you make over that amount put into a sinking fund to pay your indebtedness to me with and to cover any losses you may run up against. You can begin your sinking fund with \$6 now."

"My sundry expense account will include rent of the typewriter, won't it?" she said.

"Yes."

"Then I'll pay you the \$3 now that you laid out for that purpose."

"All right, you can do that. That leaves a balance of about \$122 you owe me. The items are all down in your account book. Don't fail to credit yourself with the \$3 you've just handed me, and remember to charge up the \$15 per week that you draw out for yourself."

"I won't forget. I'm not much of a book-keeper, but I guess I can manage to keep my simple accounts. At any rate you'll help me out if I get mixed up."

"Sure I will."

"I've done pretty well at the start, haven't I?"

"First rate. If you keep hustling for work you'll soon find it necessary to hire a girl to help you out, and then you'll make a good percentage of profit on her labor. There's Miss Wagner, a public stenographer in the Oriel Building. She's been established several years, and runs a regular advt. in several of the papers. She's got a dozen girls working for her, and keeps them busy all the time. All she does is to boss the business, and that's quite enough to keep her from going to sleep. I dare say she clears anywhere from \$50 to \$75 a week over all her expenses, and she has a pretty tidy rent to pay for her two rooms. She has \$1,500 probably invested in furniture and machines. It doesn't pay to rent a machine as a steady thing, though the company does keep it in order and furnish you with the ribbons. If you own your typewriter you can hire an inspection company to do all that for \$12, and you save the difference between that and \$36, which will more than cover the interest on the purchase price and reasonable wear and tear."

"Dear me, I wish I knew as much about business as you do," said his sister.

"You'll learn. Experience is the best teacher in the world," laughed Bob.

Bob dropped in to see his sister nearly every day, if only for a few minutes.

On the following afternoon when he went to her office he found, to his surprise, Nathan Copley, her former employer, there, dressed up like a dude.

As soon as Bob walked in the ancient looking broker got up, bowed profoundly to Nellie, and, leaving a bouquet of beauty roses he brought to her on the table, which she had refused acceptance of, took his departure with a smirk of satisfaction on his withered features.

Miss Carson looked flushed and annoyed.

"I'm so glad you came, Bob," she said, looking as if a good cry would have relieved her feelings. "That old fool, if I must call him such, has been here an hour, interfering

with my work. He wouldn't take the hints that I threw out, nor would he go when I flatly asked him to do so. He's sure to come again now that he has found out where I am. What shall I do to get rid of him for good?"

"Tell him that time is money with you and you have none to waste on visitors."

"I told him I was busy, and asked him to go, but he wouldn't. The only thing that started him was your coming."

The next time he drops in here give it to him straight from the shoulder at the start. If he won't go, walk out and ask the elevator man to come and request him to go, with instructions to eject him bodily if he refuses. He has no right to come here and annoy you whether you're busy or not. This office is your castle, and no one has any right to stay here except with your permission."

"I wish I could lock the door, but I can't, because I have customers or their representatives coming here all the time during my business hours. When I have to be absent for a short time taking dictation I put a sign up stating how long I expect to be out. If he saw the sign he'd wait till I returned, and I couldn't keep him from following me in."

"I tell you what you might do. The next time he comes in and insists on remaining, run into the office of one of your customers on this floor and telephone me. If I'm in the office I'll get permission to come up, then I'll read the riot act to Mr. Copley and warn him to keep away. If he gets his back up I'll throw him out."

"I don't want to get you in trouble."

"Ho! Don't you worry about me. My duty is to protect you, and I'm going to do it. You're not here for fun, and shall not be annoyed by that old love sick dude."

Bob saw the flowers and took them up.

"He spread himself when he bought these for you," he said.

Nellie snatched them out of his hand and flung them across the room angrily.

"It's a shame to treat those poor roses that way," chuckled Bob. "If I had a girl they would be just the ticket to present to her."

"I told him I would not accept his roses, but he went away and left them," she said, her eyes flashing. "It's a wonder he wouldn't know better at his age than to try and pay attention to a young girl. He must have softening of the brain."

"There is no fool like an old fool, they say, Nellie."

"Well, I don't want to be pestered with one."

"Rather have a young one," laughed her brother.

"No. I wouldn't have a young fool around either."

Bob laughed again, handed his sister his office telephone number, and left to get some lunch.

Two days later Bob was called to the office telephone.

His sister was at the other end and told him that Broker Copley was in her office and wouldn't leave.

Bob got permission to be away a few minutes, and he took an elevator up to the seventh floor, where he found his sister waiting for him.

"So Copley is here again?" said Bob.

"Yes."

"And he won't leave?"

"No, he won't," said his sister, with an angry flush.

"Then I'll have to request him to do so."

"I wish you would, but don't fight him."

"That depends on himself. Come along."

They entered Nellie's office together.

"Mr. Copley," said Bob, getting right down to business, "my sister is busy. Will you kindly take your departure?"

"Why, yes, of course," replied the old broker, getting up, for he didn't like the look in the boy's eye.

"You will also oblige my sister by not coming again," added the messenger.

"Why, why, your sister is a most charming young lady. I have taken a great liking to her. In fact, I have told her that she has only to say the word and she can become Mrs. Copley, live in her own house, and have everything that any lady could wish for."

"My sister doesn't think of getting married at present, but if she did she would not care to marry a man so old as yourself," said Bob.

"Why, why, I'm not so old—only sixty-five."

"She is but nineteen. But I have no time to argue the matter. She is waiting for you to go so she can go on with her work."

"Good-by, Miss Carson. I trust I shall have the pleasure of meeting you soon again. I also hope for a favorable reply to my proposal."

Nellie made no answer, nor did she even look at him.

He hesitated, but when Bob threw the door open and stood waiting for him to go, he had no further excuse for remaining and got out.

Bob followed him.

"You ought to realize that my sister has business on her hands as important to her as yours is to you, Mr. Copley," he said. "If some woman came into your private office and insisted on remaining and thus interrupting your affairs, you would certainly take measures for getting rid of her, and you wouldn't let her reach you again if you could help it. If you come here again my sister will send for me. I work right in this building on the second floor. I hope you won't give me the trouble to come up to ask you to go again."

Mr. Copley did not answer, but he took the hint, and Nellie was not bothered by him again in her office.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SHOOTING TRIP.

A few days after the foregoing incident Bob saw another chance to get in the market with apparent profit to himself.

He overheard some brokers talking about D. & H. as a sure winner.

They based their opinion on advices that one of them had received from his brother, who was secretary of the road, to the effect that the line had leased a branch road, the control of which would give them the monopoly of a large freight traffic in iron.

The road's stock was selling down around 75, but it was expected that when the news was officially announced that the stock would jump to par.

Bob decided that it was worth taking a risk on, so put up all his money to cover the margin on sixty shares.

He said nothing to his sister about his new deal.

"Time enough to tell her if I win out," he thought.

Next day George Brown came into the office to see Mr. Fitzball.

Bob happened to be in and Mr. Brown recognized him at once.

"Glad to meet you again, Carson," he said, shaking the messenger heartily by the hand.

"Thank you, sir. I'm glad to see you. Have you seen anything lately of your nephew?"

"No. And I have no wish to. I let him off for his vicious attack on me on condition that he would go back West immediately and stay there. I presume he went according to the agreement."

"I saw him at the corner of Nassau and Wall streets on the morning of the second day after my visit at your house. He was talking to a well-dressed man."

"Have you seen him since then?" asked Mr. Brown, with a look of displeasure.

"No, sir."

"Then I guess he's left the city," said the gentleman, appearing relieved. "Well, we won't talk about him further. He's a thorn in my side that I wish to forget. By the way, I was going to write you inviting you to take dinner with my ward and myself next Sunday. Can you come?"

"Why, yes, I can come if you wish me to," replied Bob, who had thought more than once of Bessie Dale since the strenuous occasion when he was introduced to her.

"All right, Carson, then I consider the matter as arranged. Come early, say about two. We dine usually at four."

Bob promised that he would be on hand about two, and then Mr. Brown asked him to take his name in to Mr. Fitzball.

During the rest of the week nothing was doing in D. & H. in the market, and the price remained about the same.

On Sunday Bob dressed himself with extra care for his visit to Mr. Brown's residence.

"My, don't we look swell to-day," smiled his sister. "So you're going to dine with your new friend, Mr. Brown? I suppose he's got a charming daughter or two, or you wouldn't have taken such care with your toilet."

"No, he hasn't got a daughter, but he's got a ward, whom I was introduced to the night I carried the package of bonds to his house."

"And you're anxious to meet her again, brother dear. I can read it in your face. I needn't ask if she's pretty, for of course she is or you wouldn't take so much interest in her."

"How do you know that I take any interest in her?"

"Oh, a little bird told me so," laughed his sister.

"Nonsense! You're just trying to pump me to see what you can find out."

"The idea! Just as if I would do such a thing," smiled Nellie, with a roguish twinkle in her eyes.

"Yes, I know; you're awfully innocent. You wouldn't do anything like that. Well, I must be off or I shall be late. I've got quite a distance to go."

So Bob got his hat and started.

He reached Mr. Brown's house a few minutes after two and was shown into the parlor, where he was presently welcomed by the gentleman himself.

In a few minutes Bessie made her appearance, looking much prettier than on the former occasion, which was due largely to the frills she put on in expectation of seeing the young messenger.

After a little while Mr. Brown left the young people together, and by the time dinner was announced they had become very well acquainted and not a little interested in each other.

During dinner Mr. Brown remarked that he and Mr. Fitzball were going shooting down in the neighborhood of Barnegat on Thanksgiving.

"We're going to start the afternoon before, and remain till the day after. How would you like to go with us?" he said.

"First rate, sir, if Mr. Fitzball has no objection."

"I asked him to let you come, and he consented. It was left to me to invite you; but, of course, you will speak to your employer about the invitation, and then he'll tell you it's all right."

"I'm much obliged to you for inviting me, Mr. Brown."

"That's all right. You needn't think of getting a gun, as I've two in the house. I'll provide everything, so all you'll have to do will be to accompany Mr. Fitzball to Jersey City, where I'll meet you both with the traps."

"I wish I were a boy," said Bessie, laughingly.

"Why, dear?" asked her guardian.

"Because then I could go shooting, too."

"As you happen to be a girl, I'm afraid we can't take you with us."

"Isn't that mean. I'll be all alone on Thanksgiving Day."

"Oh, well, you'll be well taken care of, and you are at liberty to invite any of your young lady friends to come over and visit you," said Mr. Brown.

Bob found Bessie a very companionable girl, who could play on the piano very nicely and sing quite well.

He was sorry when the clock warned him that it was time to leave.

Bessie went to the door with him and said she hoped he would call soon again.

He said it would give him great pleasure to do so, and before they parted it was arranged between them that he was to call a week from the next Wednesday.

Bob was tickled to death with the invitation to accompany his employer and Mr. Brown on a day's shooting, which emancipated him from the office for at least two days.

Of course, he would have been off one day anyhow, as Thanksgiving is a legal holiday, and one of the most important in the calendar, since it is universally observed throughout the United States, the same as Christmas or the Fourth of July.

Mr. Brown took leave of his ward about one o'clock on the day before Thanksgiving, after an early lunch, and started for the Cortland street ferry.

He wanted to reach the Jersey City side in advance of Mr. Fitzball and Bob in order to see if the traps had arrived there all right, and to check them for Barnegat village over the New Jersey Central Railroad.

His departure from home was observed by somebody besides Bessie, who kissed him a fond good-by on the stoop.

This somebody was Guy Stanford, who had been haunting the neighborhood off and on since the night he was ordered out of the house and told to return West.

Stanford's chief object in visiting his uncle that night was, as the reader has been told, money, and he was fortunate, after what transpired, in securing \$100.

He had another purpose, in which he was disappointed, and that was to secure an interview with Bessie Dale.

He had met the girl a year before in Chicago, just before Mr. Brown removed from that city to New York, bringing his ward, and all his household goods with him.

Stanford immediately fell in love with her, and his efforts to induce Bessie to elope with him and get married led to a break between him and his uncle.

In revenge for being forbidden the house he and a Chicago crook, with whom he had struck up an acquaintance, broke into the house one night and got away with quite a lot of Mr. Brown's treasures.

A smart detective traced both the booty and the thieves, recovering the one and capturing the other.

Because Stanford was his dead sister's son Mr. Brown refused to prosecute him, and through the influence of a political pull succeeded in having the charge held up in the District Attorney's office.

The young man was permitted to go free, but was warned that if he was ever arrested again on a criminal charge, his first crime would also be used against him.

This had a sobering influence on him for several months, during which interval Mr. Brown transferred his home to New York; but his infatuation for Bessie Dale did not pass away, and it finally brought him to the metropolis, as we have seen.

He wanted money, and he wanted Bessie, and it was a toss-up which he wanted most.

The first, however, being a necessity, he decided to acquire it before he attempted what appeared to him the harder proposition of the two, the acquisition of the girl.

Had he left Mr. Brown's house when that gentleman ordered him to go he would have found himself provided with material on which he could have raised \$5,000.

He made a mistake by not going while the package of bonds were in his possession.

Not having succeeded in finding out the nature or value of the securities from Bob, and having no chance to investigate the packet before his uncle's return, he was not sure the bonds would be available to him, so he tried to get some real cash from his uncle, and failing in that, his disappointment drove him to attack his relative as we have seen.

Then he was captured, the bonds taken from him, and he was sent away with \$100 to pay his way back to Chicago and keep him for awhile.

Instead of going he proceeded to formulate plans to get back at his uncle, incidentally Bob also, and to kidnap Bessie.

It was necessary to secure help to carry out his criminal designs, so he got in touch with a couple of clever rascals who thought by aiding him they could also help themselves.

A scheme involving the robbery of Mr. Brown's house

and the abduction of Bessie at the same time was hatched between the three.

Everything being in readiness, a decoy note, the object of which was to get Mr. Brown away from home on Thanksgiving night, was mailed to that gentleman on the morning of the day before.

Before the postman made his afternoon round, with the letter in his bag, Mr. Brown had started on his hunting trip, thereby unconsciously playing into the hands of the rascals, though they did not become aware of the fact until Stanford, observing his departure, and judging from the small grip he carried, in connection with Bessie's loving caress, that he was bound on some trip, the nature of which did not particularly interest him, hurriedly rejoined his pals and told them what he had seen.

"He has evidently gone on a short trip of some kind," said Harding, a well-dressed man, sporting a silk hat, "and will be away to-night at any rate. He has probably not received the note we sent him. That need not trouble us, for the purpose we had in view is otherwise attained. Instead of doing the job to-morrow night, as we intended, we will put it through to-night. No need of losing any time now that the coast is clear. It is quite possible that your uncle might return in the morning, as it's Thanksgiving Day, so it's to our interest to take advantage of our opportunity and pull the scheme off this evening. We'll go to the house in a cab. I've got one engaged for to-morrow night, but I can change the time. The driver, who is the owner of the vehicle, I can thoroughly depend on. It won't be the first shady scheme he's taken a hand in. We'll carry the girl and the booty off in it to Jersey City, where we'll connect with an auto that will answer for the rest of the trip. We should be at Barnegat by morning, and that's a very unlikely place for the officers of the law to track us."

The minor details of their project were then arranged, and Guy Stanford and his two pals parted for the time being.

CHAPTER VII.

A RATHER STARTLING DISCOVERY.

Mr. Brown, Broker Fitzball and Bob Carson reached Barnegat early in the evening, and put up at an old-fashioned inn on the suburbs of the village.

This inn had frequently been patronized by brokers from Wall Street, one of whom had recommended it to Mr. Fitzball.

It had the reputation of furnishing good entertainment, and its reputation was deserved.

The proprietor, a man by the name of Redmond, was not the most honest-looking man in the world, but as he treated his customers well, none of them took the trouble of inquiring into his antecedents.

Had they made such inquiry they would have learned nothing in the village.

Redmond's history was not known there—he took good care that it wasn't.

It was known at Police Headquarters in New York, however, and his interesting physiognomy adorned the Rogue's Gallery.

Any one interested in Redmond would have learned there that the inn proprietor had served a long term in Sing Sing for a serious crime.

Such was the shady individual who greeted Mr. Brown, messenger Bob, and his employer, when they were deposited with their traps at his door by a country wagon.

He extended to them his customary welcome, and at the moment he had no idea that their coming and brief stay would interest him beyond the liberal compensation for their entertainment his till would gather in, for Redmond was not doing any crooked work at his inn, chiefly because there was not sufficient temptation for him to indulge in it.

Redmond had no other guests at the time the three New Yorkers crossed his threshold, but he had a telegram in his pocket which prepared him for the arrival of four others in the morning.

As the telegram was signed by the man who had been his cell-mate in Sing Sing, this did not speak well for the character of the four in question.

Redmond never went back on a pal, consequently he was prepared to receive the expected four.

Indeed, the telegram was no surprise to him, as certain correspondence by letter had previously passed between him and the sender of the despatch relative to the visit of the four, the only thing missing being the date of arrival of the four, which the telegram straightened out.

A bountiful supper was placed before Mr. Brown, the broker and the young messenger, which they made short work of, and then, as they intended to start out at early dawn in search of sport, they lost no time in retiring for the night.

Even while they were eating supper things were doing up in the Bronx, New York, that would have taken all the zest out of Mr. Brown's outing had he even dreamed of their nature.

But he didn't, not being gifted with second sight, and he retired ignorant of the fact that his much-loved ward, pretty Bessie Dale, was at that moment in the power, drugged and unconscious, of his rascally nephew, Guy Stanford, and that his home had been cleaned out of everything of portable value that Stanford's aiders and abettors, Harding and Jackson, could carry away in the night hawk cab.

The said cab having deposited the booty, the girl, Guy Stanford and the two crooks at the door of a certain house in Jersey City, the three male passengers lost little time in transferring themselves, the girl and the swag to a touring automobile, which, under the expert management of Harding, was soon speeding southward along a broad New Jersey road toward the very village, and the very same inn, where the three New Yorkers were at that moment tranquilly sleeping.

An early breakfast was awaiting Mr. Brown, the broker and Bob when they appeared in the public room of the inn as the first streaks of dawn were beginning to lighten up the sky.

As soon as they had eaten it they started out on their day's shooting, accompanied by a boy connected with the inn whom Mr. Brown had hired to show them the best places to find game.

They carried their lunch with them and did not return

until the shades of evening were falling over the landscape.

They were tired but in excellent humor, for they had bagged a fine lot of birds.

After a good wash they sat down to supper with a fine appetite.

"I've had the time of my life to-day," said Bob.

"I'm glad you enjoyed yourself," said Mr. Brown, who seemed to have taken quite a fancy to the manly young messenger.

"Youth is the time to enjoy one's self," put in Broker Fitzball, with a smile. "I often linger over recollections of my own young days before the responsibilities of life changed the current of my thoughts and actions."

"Oh, well, we can't always remain young; but there is no reason why we should not have good times in spite of our advancing years. At any rate, I manage to enjoy myself in my own way. Like our young friend, I also had a first-class time to-day, and I dare say you have no reason to feel dissatisfied with your trip to this rural neighborhood."

"Dissatisfied! Certainly not. I've had quite a holiday," responded the broker.

They rose from the table and adjourned to the public room, where the two gentlemen took seats around the fire, while Bob walked to the door and looked out.

It was a clear, cold and still night.

The stars were all out, but there was no moon.

The road that led into the main village street was bordered with leafless trees, standing grim and motionless against the background of the sky.

These trees continued along on the side of the road facing the inn, with breaks here and there through which, had it not been dark, the sterile looking fields could have been seen.

There were more fields behind the inn, stretching away toward the ocean.

Altogether, Bob thought it was an ideal country outlook.

Having eaten a hearty supper, he thought a short walk in the bracing air would do him good.

There was no entertainment for him to join Mr. Brown and Broker Fitzball, and listen to their talk.

Youth prefers to hobnob with youth, so Bob concluded to look up the lad who accompanied them on their trip.

After walking up the road a short distance and back, he went around to the back of the inn.

Here he found a yard, with an open shed and other out-houses, beyond which lay the denuded fields.

He saw light shining from the windows of an ell, and from the rattle of dishes in that quarter he concluded it was the kitchen.

He walked over and peered in through one of the windows.

The boy he had come to look for and a woman were busy with pots and pans, as well as the pile of supper dishes.

Bob saw that he couldn't intrude on the youth for the present, for he had his hands full of work, so he strolled around the yard.

He came to the barn, the door of which was partly open.

A lantern hanging from a nail on a post dimly illuminated the interior.

The place was filled with various kinds of agricultural

implements, harness, a couple of wagons and a heavy sled, and diverse other farming paraphernalia.

His curiosity to inspect some of the things that were new to him induced him to step inside and look around.

He was bending over a cultivator when two persons walked into the barn.

They did not notice his presence and came to a stop not far from him under the lighted lantern.

"Say, Harding, what in thunder are we going to do?" said a voice that sounded a bit familiar to Bob. "I never heard of anything more unlucky. This inn, that you spoke of being such a snug retreat for the girl, shelters at this moment my uncle, her guardian. Why, if he saw me the fat would all be in the fire. He supposes I am out in Chicago."

Bob looked at the speaker in a startled way and recognized him as Guy Stanford.

"He didn't see you, did he?" replied his companion.

"No, fortunately."

"Then what's the use of getting rattled? This, by some strange chance, is the place he was starting for when you saw him leave his house. Redmond told me he had three guests, two gentlemen and a boy, who had come from New York for a day's shooting, so they will go back in the morning, or in the afternoon at the latest. All you have to do is to keep out of sight till they have taken their departure, and then your uncle's unexpected visit here will amount to nothing as far as we are concerned."

"That's so; but the young lady has recovered her senses, you know, and if she should kick up a shindy in the house it would attract attention, and might lead to unpleasant results to us," said Stanford.

"Don't worry about that. Redmond will take care that nothing happens to queer us."

"I hope so. I don't know what my uncle would do to me after what has happened if he found out my connection with the affair."

"You keep out of the way and he'll never find out."

"There'll be the deuce to pay when he gets back home, finds the house cleaned out and the girl gone."

"What do you care? He'll never suspect you had a hand in it, for he thinks you are out West."

"He'll put detectives on our scent, and move heaven and earth to find his ward. He thinks as much of that girl as if she were his daughter."

"They'll never trace us here," said Harding, confidently.

"I don't know. A smart chap and I pulled off a job on my uncle in Chicago, and it was done so slick that we counted ourselves safe; but inside of three days we were both nabbed, and my uncle got all his property back."

"You must have left some clue for the detectives to work on, or your uncle suspected you on general principles, had you shadowed, and the police did the rest."

"I don't know how it was, but it seems to be that it's no fool thing to have a sleuth or two after you."

"You're altogether too nervous. After you get used to this kind of business you'll look at things differently."

"I'd feel easier if we could get the girl out of the house and keep her away until my uncle has gone back to New York."

"Oh, she's safe enough where she is, in the far room of

the garret. She'd have to scream pretty loud for any one to hear her. If she was heard, Redmond has a ready excuse to offer. He'd represent he has a partially demented member of his family, whom he kept in the house in preference to sending her to a public institution."

"All right. I leave things in your hands, Harding. You and the inn-keeper are pals, so I dare say everything will turn out all right."

"Of course they will. You do what I tell you—keep out of the way until your uncle has left the neighborhood, and nothing will happen. You can sleep on the hay in the loft to-night. You'll find it quite comfortable."

"I'm willing to do anything rather than be seen by my uncle."

"I'm going in now. I'll send Jackson out to keep you company."

After what he had heard, Bob had no desire to be caught eavesdropping, so he remained perfectly silent and motionless as Harding passed him and made his exit.

Guy Stanford remained standing under the lantern, apparently thinking, and so it was impossible for the young messenger to withdraw unnoticed.

He was amazed at the discovery he had made, and his heart beat with excitement as he realized the meaning of it.

It appeared that since Mr. Brown left home the afternoon previous his house had been entered and plundered; and worse than all it seemed that Bessie Dale had been abducted and brought down to the very inn he was stopping at with the gentlemen.

Of course the stolen property had been brought there, too.

From the references made by Stanford's companion it was clear that Redmond, the landlord, was a friend of his, and was aiding and abetting him in the scheme.

"Lord; how lucky that I came in here and overheard the conversation between those two rascals," breathed Bob. "Mr. Brown must learn how things stand, but I must be cautious not to let these men get on to me. Bessie is confined in the back part of the garret. She ought to be rescued first of all. I'd like to save her myself, for I think a lot of her, and if she escaped through me it would make me solid with her. Mr. Brown would also think a lot more of me. Yes, I must look after her first. Won't Mr. Brown be astonished to find her down here? He won't do a thing to his nephew if he catches him. He'll have no mercy on him this time."

Bob, while soliloquizing, leaned against the cultivator a little too hard, and as a result the implement, which was resting on wooden blocks, went over with a crash, and the boy went floundering on top of it.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.

Guy Stanford, who believed himself alone in the barn, gave a startled jump when the noise reached his ears.

Bob's efforts to regain his feet told the young rascal that somebody was within a few feet of him, and he walked over to see who it was.

At that moment Bob got up and the two came face to face.

As the lantern light shone full on the young messenger's face, Stanford recognized him at once with a gasp of consternation.

"You here!" he gritted, savagely.

"Yes, Mr. Stanford, I'm here," replied Bob, coolly.

"What brought you here from New York?"

"I came down here yesterday evening with my employer and your uncle for a day's shooting," replied Bob.

"Oh, I see," said Stanford, looking relieved, for he had feared that Bob might have got wind of the robbery and abduction of Bessie Dale, and have followed him and his companions, though such a supposition was not a reasonable one. "What made you come in this barn?"

"I was just looking around."

"When did you come in? I didn't hear you."

"Oh, a few minutes ago."

"You must have seen me. Why didn't you speak to me?"

"Because I don't care to have anything to do with a person who stunned me with a slung-shot and then went through my clothes and robbed me."

Stanford glared at him.

"Look here," he exclaimed with sudden suspicion, "was I alone when you came in here, or was I talking to somebody?"

"I must decline to satisfy your curiosity, and as I have no wish to continue this conversation, I'll bid you good-night."

"Hold on!" cried Stanford, seizing him by the arm, "we don't part so quick. I don't intend that you should go right to my uncle and tell him I am down here."

"Keep your hands off me," said Bob, shaking himself loose and starting for the door.

At that moment Jackson appeared at the entrance.

"Don't let this chap get out," cried Stanford. "I suspect he's been spying on us."

Jackson immediately blocked Bob's path.

Stanford then sprang at the young messenger and grabbed him again.

"Get hold of him by the other arm, Jackson," he said.

The newcomer did so, and Bob found himself a prisoner.

"Bring him along. We'll tie him up to yonder post."

"Who is he?" asked Jackson, to whom Bob was a stranger.

"He's a Wall Street messenger."

"A Wall Street messenger, eh? Then he's the boy who came down here shooting with your uncle and the broker."

"He is."

"Does he know you?"

"He does."

"That's awkward, for he's likely to tell your uncle that you are here."

"He won't get the chance if I can help it."

"I don't see how you can stop him. You can't keep him a prisoner in here long, for as soon as he's missed a search will be made for him."

"Help me tie him, and then go and bring Harding. It will never do for my uncle to learn that I'm here."

"No, I'm afraid it would queer all our arrangements."

said Jackson, holding on to Bob, while Stanford bound him to the post with several pieces of hay rope.

The young man from Chicago walked to the door with Jackson.

They stood there conversing a few minutes, and then Jackson went away.

Stanford returned to Bob.

"You see what you get for butting in where you have no business," he gritted, eyeing the boy in no pleasant way.

Bob did not answer him.

"Did you hear any of the talk that passed between me and the tall man in the plug hat?" said Stanford.

"I decline to have anything to say to you," answered Bob.

"That's equivalent to admitting that you did."

Bob remained silent.

"You stubborn monkey, I've a great mind to smash you in the face," he said.

"I dare say you're coward enough to do it," replied Bob.

"If you don't answer me, you'll have to speak out when Harding gets here. He won't take any fooling from you."

This threat had no effect on Bob, and Stanford looked black enough to curdle new milk.

Finding that he could not force the boy to talk, he walked nervously up and down the barn, waiting for Jackson to return with Harding.

In a short time the two men appeared.

Jackson had put his companion wise to the situation, at least as far as he understood it, and Harding admitted that they were up against a serious complication.

As soon as Stanford saw them step in he rushed forward and began to talk with Harding in a low tone.

After a brief interval the three approached the helpless Bob.

Harding studied his face for a moment or two before he spoke.

"You're the young fellow who came down here with the two gentlemen and went out shooting with them to-day, eh?"

"Yes," replied Bob.

"What brought you around to this barn after your supper?"

"I was just looking around, that's all."

"Did you come in while Stanford and I were talking together?"

"No. I came in here before your arrival."

"But you were in here while we were conversing."

"I admit the fact."

"Where were you during that time?"

"What difference does it make to you where I was?"

"It makes considerable difference. Did you hear what we were talking about?"

"I decline to say whether I did or not."

"I think that is an admission that you did. At any rate, we can't afford to take any chances with you. We have got to believe that you spied on us. As our conversation was of a specially confidential nature, we can't let you go free to repeat it to your friends in the public room. I believe you and Stanford have met before under conditions that make you unfriendly to each other. That, however, has nothing to do with the present situation. We believe you have acquired knowledge that makes you danger-

ous to our interests. It is up to us to prevent you from using it against us. Consequently we shall keep you a prisoner until we can see our way clear to letting you go."

Harding was evidently an educated and somewhat polished crook.

He dressed like a gentleman of means, and carried himself accordingly.

No one unacquainted with his history would have supposed he had served a long term in prison, but such was the fact.

By his directions a trap was lifted in the floor at the back of the barn, and Bob, after his hands had been securely bound behind his back, was lowered through it into a narrow vault, the walls of which were formed of stone, and there he was left to ruminate over the vicissitudes of life, and to wonder what Mr. Brown and his employer would do when he failed to turn up.

"Where is Carson?" said Mr. Brown about that time, looking around the public room of the inn.

"He went out when we sat down here, and I haven't seen him around since," said Broker Fitzball.

"Well, it's time we turned in, and that he did, too. I'll take a look outside and see if I can find him," said Brown, starting for the door.

He expected to find Bob on the veranda, though the night was chilly, for he could not imagine where else he could be.

He was not there, however, nor anywhere around the front of the house.

Redmond, the landlord, was summoned and asked to look Bob up.

He departed to do so, but as he had already been informed by Harding that the boy had made discoveries which necessitated him being taken care of, he simply went into the kitchen, where his pal and Jackson were playing cards, told them the errand he was on, and after a certain time returned to the public room and reported that he could find no sign of the boy.

"Maybe he's gone to bed," suggested the broker.

"We'll look in the room he occupied last night and see," said Brown.

They went upstairs, but Bob was not in the room.

"I can't imagine where he could have gone," said Brown.

"Nor I. His absence is very singular," replied Fitzball.

At that juncture the landlord came up and said that the stableman told him that Bob had gone to the village with Joe, the lad who had accompanied them that day, to attend a dance, and he might not be back till late.

"He ought to have told us that he was going," said Brown, "so we would have known where he was. Probably he forgot to do so. Well, that must be where he has gone, so we need not worry about him."

Satisfied that Bob would turn up later on, the two gentlemen retired for the night, and being fatigued after their day's exercise, were soon asleep.

In the meantime Bob was far from enjoying himself in the dismal hole to which he had been consigned.

The trap had not been entirely closed above his head, for it was necessary he should have air to breathe, but otherwise that did not make his position any easier.

After considering the discouraging outlook for half an

hour he set to work to try and free himself of the hay rope that bound his arms.

At first this appeared to be a hopeless job, since the men had tied him as securely as they could.

But Bob was not a boy to fall down when up against a hard proposition, so he kept patiently at work.

At the end of half an hour he was no nearer success than when he started in.

Finally he walked over to one of the walls and began drawing his arms upward against it as well as he could.

It was a long time before this method brought any satisfactory result, for the rope was small and soft, and Bob could not lift his arms very high.

It was a fatiguing process, too, and compelled him to stop often to rest.

During one of his resting spells Guy Stanford came to the trap and flashed the lantern down into the hole to see how the prisoner was faring.

The moment Bob saw the light he slipped down on the floor and pretended to be asleep.

Stanford called to him, and, receiving no response, concluded that he was asleep, and retired, feeling sure he was perfectly safe.

As soon as the young man from Chicago had gone away, Bob recommenced his exertions, and half an hour later had freed himself of the rope.

But it was no easy matter, even with his arms free, to get out of the vault, the trap being all of seven feet from the floor.

Bob, however, was as active as a monkey, and possessed strong muscles.

He knew about where the trap was in the darkness.

After leaping a number of times in the air, he at length succeeded in grasping the edge of the barn floor.

It was necessary to sustain his weight with one arm in order to use his other hand to push up the trap.

He gave the trap a fling and it opened backward.

He expected that it would strike the floor with a bang that might attract attention.

It happened that a bag of grain lay behind it and arrested it.

Bob pulled himself up till his chin rested on the floor.

Then with the help of his elbows he managed, after much trouble, to scramble out.

"Free at last," he breathed. "Now to put a spoke in the operations of those rascals."

First, however, he took the precaution to replace the trap as it had been left by his captors, and then he made his way forward in the dark, for the lantern had been removed from the post, and the barn floor was now unlighted.

Stanford had retired to his roost in the hay in the loft, but of that fact Bob was ignorant.

The young messenger being provided with matches, struck one, so he could find the door.

When he located it he found it locked and the key gone.

That fact did not discourage him, for he was satisfied there must be another exit—a window, or an opening through which he could escape.

There was nothing of the kind on the ground floor, so he ran up the steps to the loft.

He struck a match to look around.

The flash awakened Stanford, and he started up on the hay.

In a moment he recognized Bob and realized that he was free.

With a cry of rage he sprang at the boy, knocking the match from his fingers into the hay.

In another moment they were engaged in a desperate struggle for the mastery.

CHAPTER IX.

BOB RESTORES BESSIE TO FREEDOM.

Over and over they rolled on the floor of the loft punching and pummeling each other in the darkness.

But the darkness did not last long.

The match had started a tiny blaze in the dry hay, and this soon began to spread, and lighted up the loft.

At first the combatants paid no attention to the circumstance in their eagerness to overcome the other.

But at length Bob realized that the place was on fire.

"Let go, will you. The loft is blazing. We'll both be burned up if we remain here," he cried.

Stanford saw the increasing blaze and let go in his fright.

Bob sprang to his feet and looked around for an opening through which they both could escape.

He saw a wooden shutter which he guessed covered a windowless opening.

He rushed over to it while Stanford was making frantic but ineffectual efforts to put out the fire, which was now spreading rapidly.

The bar that held the shutter was held in place by two wooden supports, and Bob easily and quickly detached it.

To open the shutter was then the work of a moment.

A twenty-foot drop lay beneath him, but that did not for a moment deter the boy.

Calling to Stanford to save himself, he swung his body out of the opening and let go.

Down he went like a flash and alighted in a heap, somewhat shaken up but not at all hurt.

He ran toward the inn, which was shrouded in darkness, for all had retired for the night.

By the time he reached it the fire had gathered such headway that the flames were shooting out through the window by which he had made his escape, and the smoke was sifting through the roof.

Bob looked back, but saw no sign of Guy Stanford.

The fire had not yet attracted any attention.

Satisfied that he could not get into the inn in the ordinary way, Bob mounted to the roof of the kitchen ell, and tried one of the second-story windows that overlooked it.

To his satisfaction it was not locked, and in less than a minute he was in the house.

He made no attempt to arouse the inmates, for though the barn was doomed, the fire could not spread to the house.

He did not want to call attention to himself, but take advantage of the chance that was his to visit the back garret and rescue Bessie Dale.

He soon found the stairs that led to the garret and made his way up them.

When he reached the narrow landing it was all aglow with the reflection of the blaze at the barn which shone in through the window that lighted the place.

Suddenly he heard the shrill cry of "Fire!" in Joe's voice.

The boy, who slept in a small room over the stable, close to the barn, had been awakened, and saw the blaze from his window.

He threw up the sash and gave the alarm, awakening the hired man, who slept in the next room.

The shouting reached the inn and aroused Redmond.

When he saw his barn ablaze he got into his clothes in great excitement, ran to the room where Harding and Jackson were asleep, aroused them, and then rushed forth.

"By heavens!" cried Harding when he realized the situation, "that boy will be burned to death. Hurry, Jackson, we must try and save him."

"And how about young Stanford?" said Jackson, jumping into his clothes. "He was sleeping in the loft, which is where the fire is. If he hasn't got out long before, this his fate is sealed."

"He must have escaped and given the alarm," said Harding. "Perhaps he has helped the boy out under the floor. I hope so, for I have no wish to have his death on my conscience through this accident."

"How in thunder could the barn have ignited?" said Jackson.

"How do lots of things happen in this world? Don't ask me to explain riddles. Come on."

The two men rushed downstairs and out of the house.

During this excitement Bob had stood at the window of the attic landing and watched the fire, for the moment forgetting his errand.

Then he recollected that he had no time to lose.

"Now is my time while the men are outside," he told himself.

The door of the attic was near him.

The key was in the lock, so all he had to do was to turn it, open the door and walk into the unfinished, long, low-roofed room.

The reflection of the fire lighted up the place sufficiently for him to see the interior with fair distinctness.

The only furniture was a chair and a cot at one end.

On the latter lay the form of a girl, fully dressed.

That this was Bessie he did not doubt.

After a long day of grief over her unfortunate situation she had sunk down into a wearied sleep, exhausted nature having yielded to the strain upon her nerves.

Bob slipped over to the cot, and striking a match, looked down at her.

Yes, it was Bessie, sure enough.

The light of the match aroused her from her troubled repose, and she started up with a little cry of fright.

"Don't be afraid, Miss Bessie. It is I—Bob Carson," he said, reassuringly.

She stared into his face in a bewildered way.

"Oh, Mr. Carson, is it really you?" she cried.

"Don't you recognize me?" he said, as the match expired in his fingers.

"Yes, yes. Did you and my dear guardian follow me

here to this house, or was my terrible experience but a dream? No, no, it is no dream, for this room is not familiar to me. Oh, save me, Mr. Carson. Take me back to my home."

She clung feverishly to his arm, and looked beseechingly into his face, which she could scarcely see in the gloom of the corner.

"I came here to rescue you, Miss Bessie, so you may feel safe now."

"How did you know I was carried off? And where is my guardian? You were with him. You and he and Mr. Fitzball went down to Barnegat to shoot on Thanksgiving Day, which was yesterday. Where is this house?"

"I'll try to answer your questions if you will give me the chance."

"Do, please," she cried, eagerly.

"This house where you have been brought to is the very inn at Barnegat where your guardian, my employer and myself are stopping."

"Oh!" she exclaimed.

"Your guardian is in this house now, and I'm going to take you right to him."

She sprang up with a cry of delight.

"Come, I will lead you downstairs," he said.

"Oh!" she exclaimed as she caught sight of the burning barn, now in flames from the ground floor up. "There is a fire."

"Never mind. It is only a barn. Don't be frightened."

He put his arm around her waist and led her from the garret.

They went down the stairs to the next floor, Bessie clinging to him as a protector.

A door let them into the corridor where the sleeping rooms of the second floor were.

Mr. Brown had been aroused by the disturbance and excitement outside, and when he saw the fire he knocked on Broker Fitzball's door and awakened him.

The two men at that moment were in the broker's room looking out of the window at the fire.

Bob knew the room occupied by Bessie's guardian, and not being aware that he was up and next door, he knocked loudly on it.

Mr. Brown heard the knock and supposed that somebody connected with the house had come to arouse him.

He walked to the door of the chamber he was in and looked out.

"Who is there?" he asked.

Bessie heard his voice, and springing away from Bob she rushed to her guardian and threw herself into his astonished arms with a cry of joy.

"Why, why, Bessie!" he exclaimed, recognizing her in utter amazement.

"Yes, yes; oh, guardy, dear guardy, I—I——"

She burst into tears and clung convulsively to him.

"Hello, Carson, you here?"

"Yes, sir."

"What does this all mean? How came my Bessie here? Do you know anything about it? To me it seems a most astonishing circumstance. At this hour of the night, or morning, too. You seem to have brought her up here—can you throw any light on the matter?"

"Yes, sir. She was kidnapped from your house by your nephew, Guy Stanford."

"What!" gasped Mr. Brown. "It can't be possible. I thought my nephew had gone back to Chicago as he agreed to do."

"No, sir, he did not go back."

"Bessie, is it true that Guy Stanford carried you off from the house?"

"I don't know, guardy. I have not seen him since the night he was at our house. All I know is that I was sitting in your room on the second floor reading last night. It was about nine o'clock. Suddenly a man, with a mask on his face, appeared. I was dreadfully frightened. Behind him came a second man, also masked. As they advanced toward me I jumped up and screamed. Then they seized me, pressed a handkerchief over my face, and I became unconscious. That is all I remember till I found myself in the garret of this house, a prisoner."

"My goodness!" ejaculated Mr. Brown. "Then you did not recognize Guy Stanford as one of the two men?"

"No, I would not know either again if I saw them," she replied.

"Probably neither was your nephew, for it is likely he remained in the background to avoid detection," said Bob.

"How do you know that my nephew was implicated in this outrage?"

"You will understand when I tell you my story."

Bob, in as few words as possible, told what he had overheard between Stanford and Harding in the barn that evening.

He then told how his presence there was discovered; how he was made a prisoner and thrust into the vault under the barn floor; how he made his escape to the loft and then ran foul with Stanford.

"While we were struggling the hay in the loft caught fire—it might have been the lighted match I dropped that started it—and that stopped the scrap. I got out through a window, and I suppose your nephew followed me. I then came here to the inn, and knowing that Miss Bessie was a prisoner in the garret, I went there and brought her down here. That's the whole story," said Bob.

"You have rendered Bessie and me a great service, Carson, and neither of us will ever forget it," said Mr. Brown, seizing his hand and wringing it warmly.

"You're welcome, sir," replied Bob.

Bessie looked at him with shining eyes and held out her hand to him.

Bob took it eagerly, for between him and the girl there already existed an unconscious bond of sympathy, that in time was to develop into something stronger.

"You had better take Bessie into your room, Carson, until I have dressed myself, for I don't think I shall sleep any more to-night, knowing, as I now do, that the landlord of this inn is a scamp."

"What measures are you going to take about your nephew and those other men? The property they stole from your house they, of course, brought here, and I guess you want to recover it. Hadn't I better go to the village, hunt up a constable or two, and bring them here?"

"Yes, yes; that's the best thing you can do," said Mr. Brown. "Take Bessie to your room and let her lock herself in till I come for her."

"I'm afraid the birds will have flown by the time I get back," said Bob, "for your nephew knows I have escaped, and they will know what they have to expect if they stay here. They will carry away their plunder, but at any rate they won't be able to take Miss Bessie away with them."

"Bessie is of more importance to me than every dollar I own. Since she is safe I do not worry about the rest. However, I hope to recover my property and land the three rascals in jail. My nephew will receive no further consideration from me. I am done with him. He can scarcely disgrace his family connection more than he has done. Better he had died in his cradle than have lived to become a villain."

Bob started for the nearby village, and after a lot of trouble succeeded in finding one of the night constables.

To him he quickly related his story and asked for assistance to secure the three men before they made their escape with their booty.

The constable hunted up two others to help him, and the four hurried to the inn.

By that time the barn was a mass of smoldering ruins, from which had been taken the charred body of Guy Stanford.

Why he had failed to make his escape, which he might easily have done, Bob never could understand.

But the fire marked his finish, and though his uncle had his body removed to New York, and gave it respectable burial, he had no mourners.

On the arrival of the constables a hunt was made, despite the inn-keeper's protest, for Harding and Jackson, but they were not found, nor was any trace of the booty discovered.

Redmond was not molested, as Bob had no tangible evidence to prove that he was in any way connected with the two men who were wanted.

As soon as Mr. Brown identified the corpse as that of his nephew, he arranged with a local undertaker to prepare the body for burial and ship it to New York.

Prior to that he telegraphed to the New York police authorities to visit his house and see what had happened there.

The reply he received later in the day caused him to send to Jersey City for a detective to try and trace Harding and Jackson, accurate personal descriptions of whom Bob furnished the officer with when he arrived.

The party, now augmented to four by the presence of Bessie, left for New York that evening, with the body of the young man from Chicago in the baggage car.

CHAPTER X.

TRAPPED.

Bob had a far different and more exciting story to relate to his mother and sister when he returned home than he had expected to bring back with him.

Naturally he astonished them with his account of the abduction of Bessie Dale, and how he accidentally became the chief factor in her rescue.

"She will love her heart to you after that," said his sis-

ter, who had an idea that her brother was deeply interested in the girl.

"How do you know, Nellie?" asked Bob, a bit gruffly.

"Isn't it natural that she should be very grateful for what you have done for her; and isn't gratitude the next thing in love?" asked his sister.

"Maybe it is in a woman, and as you're one you ought to know."

"I'll wager you are already more than half in love with the fair Miss Bessie yourself," laughed Nellie.

"You girls are always ready to bet on anything, but if you happen to lose are quite as ready to squeal and forget to pay up," growled Bob.

"Thank you, I always pay my debts. I shall pay you every cent I owe you as soon as I earn enough to do it."

"I'm not worrying about what you owe me, so don't put me in mind of it."

"Aren't you going to bring Bessie Dale here and introduce her to mother and me?"

"I will if I can induce her to come. I'd like you to meet her. She's the finest little girl in New York, or anywhere else," added Bob, enthusiastically.

Nellie laughed.

"There, I knew you were quite gone on her. I should have won my bet had I wagered with you."

Bob looked a bit confused, and hastened to change the topic.

The first thing Bob did the next morning was to look up D. & H. in the market report, and he saw, with satisfaction, that it was a point higher than he bought it for.

"It will be great if that stock should go to par. I'd make about \$1,500, and that would be a big financial lift," he thought.

He kept his eye on the stock that morning whenever he got the chance, but it did not go any higher during the two-hour session of the Exchange.

On the following Tuesday it was up another point, and next day it closed at 78, which was a gain of three points.

That evening he called on Bessie Dale, as he had promised to do, and received a very encouraging welcome from her.

He passed a happy evening in her company, and promised to call on the following Wednesday evening.

We may as well say now that he became a steady caller thereafter, and the friendship between them grew stronger as time passed.

Before the succeeding Wednesday arrived, D. & H. took on a sudden boom when the news we have mentioned in a previous chapter came out, and the stock did go to par.

In fact, Bob sold his shares for a fraction above 100 and cleared the \$1,500 he had hoped to win.

Then he told his sister about the deal, and showed her that he was now worth \$2,100.

"Aren't you the mean boy not to tell me you were speculating again," Nellie said.

"Ho! I'd only have got a lecture from you about the risk I was taking, so I thought I'd keep the matter to myself till I saw how I came out."

"If you could only be lucky all the time you'd get rich," she said.

"I know, but that little word 'if' is a great stumbling block sometimes."

The detective you had put on the job of capturing Harding and Jackson failed to find any trace of the two rascals, notwithstanding the excellent personal description he had of them.

While he was looking for them in New Jersey, they were walking the streets of New York slightly disguised.

Harding spent most of his time in Wall Street, which showed his nerve.

He was something of a speculator, and was rather fortunate at the game.

A month after the robbery of Mr. Brown's house, or about Christmas week, Jackson took a trip out west with a portion of the swag and disposed of it in Cincinnati.

He was back again by the middle of January with the proceeds, and both him and Harding put up their money on O. & N. stock for a rise.

It happened that Bob had a tip on that stock and had bought 200 shares on the usual margin.

In about ten days the stock went up more than ten points, and Bob cleared about \$2,100 on it, making him worth a little over \$4,000.

The two crooks were equally fortunate.

Bob passed them on Wall and Broad streets several times without having the faintest suspicion of their identity.

They knew him, however, but did not give him any special attention until a week later, when Bob rushed into the little bank to buy 400 shares of L. & M., which he had an idea was due for a rise.

Right behind him at the window stood Jackson, and he noted the fact that the boy made the deal in his own name, and passed over \$4,000 deposit to the margin clerk.

He reported the matter to Harding when they met later, and the two men wondered whether the boy was operating for himself or somebody else.

They could hardly believe that the \$4,000 was his money, but it was decided to watch him and note when he cashed in on the deal, and then try to get the money he received away from him.

Harding and Jackson, for certain reasons, decided to rent an office in the financial district.

They found a good-sized room on Broad street, furnished it with a desk, ticker and other useful articles, and had the sign "Fitch & Bacon" put on the door.

Harding represented himself as Fitch, and Jackson as Bacon.

They hadn't been in possession more than a week when a mysterious robbery happened on their floor.

A broker's office safe was burglarized and several thousand dollars' worth of negotiable bonds taken.

Nobody suspected that Fitch & Bacon had any connection with the crime, but soon afterward Bacon went West with a heavily loaded grip, and when he came back the bank account of Fitch & Bacon received a considerable rise in funds.

While Jackson, alias Bacon, was West, Bob cleaned up a profit of over \$6,000 on his L. & M. deal.

Harding visited the little bank every day, and when he saw Bob come in and go up to the window, he was right behind him taking note of the fact that the boy was selling out at a good advance.

Bob, however, collected nothing that trip, and Harding did not expect that he would.

Next day he watched for Bob to appear, and when he did, and the bank made a settlement with him, Harding saw that he received a certificate of deposit for \$10,000 in his own name.

"I guess the money belongs to him after all," thought the gentlemanly crook. "Jackson and I must get that certificate away from him."

When Jackson got back Harding and he framed up a job on Bob.

They found it wasn't safe to operate further in their building, so they didn't care how soon they gave up their office.

They decided to wind up their present connection with Wall Street by cleaning Bob out of his \$10,000.

That sum, with a matter of \$15,000 they had on deposit in bank, would enable them to enjoy life for awhile somewhere else.

One morning soon after his L. & M. deal, Bob received a letter in the morning mail.

The letter bore the printed heading, "Fitch & Bacon, Financiers, No. — Broad street, sixth floor," and was signed by George Fitch.

The contents stated that Mr. Fitch wished to see Bob on important business that afternoon at four o'clock.

"You have been recommended to our notice by George Brown," concluded the communication.

"I wonder what Mr. Fitch wants to see me about?" thought Bob, as he read the brief note a second time.

It was impossible for him to guess, so the only way to learn was to call as he was requested to do, and Bob decided to do so.

Accordingly at four o'clock Bob knocked on the door of Fitch & Bacon, and was bidden to enter.

"My name is Carson, and I called to see Mr. Fitch," said Bob, looking inquiringly at a tall, well-dressed man, with a bearded face, who somehow or another looked familiar to him.

"That's my name," said the bogus Fitch, who was seated at a desk, and was alone in the office. "Take a seat, young man."

"I received a note from you this morning asking me to call," said Bob.

"Exactly. I wished to see you on particular business," said the disguised Harding.

"Well, what is this business you wished to see me about?"

"Ahem! I believe you speculate on the market?"

"Who told you that I speculate?" asked Bob.

He never told a soul but his sister about his operations, so he could not understand how this Mr. Fitch could have any idea that he speculated.

"The information came to us through a person who has seen you more than once at the little bank on Nassau street."

"Without admitting that I do speculate, may I ask what that has to do with you sending for me?"

"It has a bearing on it. Our information, which is reliable, shows us that on Thursday, January 15, you closed out a deal on L. & M. by which you netted quite a profit, and that on the following afternoon you received, in settling with the bank, a certificate of deposit for \$10,000. That is correct, isn't it?"

"Will you kindly state the object of this interview?"

"Have you got that certificate of deposit about you?"

"What has that to do with my visit here?"

"It has considerable to do with it. Kindly produce the document."

"You will have to excuse me complying with your request. You might just as well ask me to produce my pocket-book."

Harding got up from his chair.

"Will you seat yourself at my desk, please?" he said.

"What for?" asked Bob, rather astonished at the request.

"I wish you to read over and sign a document I shall place before you."

"What kind of document is it?"

"You will understand its nature when you see it."

With some hesitation Bob took the vacated pivot-chair.

At that juncture another man entered the room.

"Carson, my partner, Mr. Bacon," said the tall man.

Bob bowed slightly to the newcomer, who also bowed and crossed the room to the ticker.

He also looked familiar to the boy.

"The paper I wish you to sign is a transfer to us of your certificate of deposit. Here it is. Read it over, and then put your name to it," said the disguised Harding.

"Look ahere, Mr. Fitch, what does all this talk mean, anyway?" asked Bob, suspiciously.

"It means that we wish to secure that certificate of deposit."

"I don't know what you're trying to get at, but I do know that I am not going to give you the certificate, nor sign any paper in connection with it."

"I think you will," said Harding, removing his beard and showing his clean-shaven face.

Bob recognized the crook at once, and realizing that he had walked into some kind of trap, he attempted to spring up.

Before the boy knew what was going to happen to him, Jackson suddenly threw a cloth over his head and pulled him backward.

He tried to grasp his assailant, but Harding prevented that by stepping forward and seizing him by the wrists.

Bob, taken at such a disadvantage, could put up but an ineffectual struggle against the two rascals.

To make matters worse, he felt his senses leaving him, for the cloth was saturated with some kind of drug that acted with powerful effect on him.

Realizing that the men intended to rob him of his certificate of deposit, he made one final desperate attempt to free himself.

It was a failure, and then everything grew dark around him and he knew no more.

CHAPTER XL.

BOB TURNS THE TABLES ON HIS ENEMIES.

When Bob's struggles ceased, Jackson removed the cloth from his head and threw it into a corner.

Then he held the boy in the chair while Harding searched his pocket.

The certificate of deposit soon came to light.

"This, of course, is useless without his signature," said Harding; "but as I have a specimen of this young fellow's signature, and am clever at imitating such things, I fancy we'll have no great difficulty in getting the money to-morrow morning. He can fight the matter out with the bank afterward."

With Jackson's assistance he lifted the boy out of the chair and laid him over near the ticker.

Then he sat down at the desk and began to practice on Bob's signature.

In about ten minutes he had produced a pretty clever fac simile.

He drew the certificate of deposit toward him and reproduced it on the line printed for that purpose.

"There," he said, holding it up for his companion's inspection, "I guess that will do. What do you think?"

"It's a first-class imitation," replied Jackson.

"It will fool the bank people, don't you think?"

"If it doesn't I shall be much surprised."

"Now," said Harding, putting the certificate in his pocket, "what shall we do with this boy? He'll come to his senses some time before the bank opens in the morning."

"Get a cab and take him uptown to Jerry's place. He'll see that the boy doesn't get free until after we have left the city with the proceeds of our latest enterprise," said Jackson.

"Well, you go and get the cab. We'll tell the elevator man that our young friend is drunk, and we are taking him home."

Jackson laughed and went out.

There is always a cab to be found on Broad street, so Jackson had no trouble in securing one.

They carried Bob downstairs and put him into it.

Harding got inside with him while Jackson got up with the driver.

The vehicle then started uptown.

The two rascals made a miscalculation with regard to the time they expected Bob to remain unconscious.

He came to his senses ahead of their schedule, or about eleven o'clock that evening.

He found himself in a small furnished room, lying on the bed.

At first he could not understand the situation, but gradually his brain cleared and he remembered what had happened to him in the office of Fitch & Bacon.

He had certainly been removed from that place to his present surroundings, and Bob wondered in what part of the city he was now.

Rising from the bed and looking out of the window, he saw it was night, and that the prospect comprised a back yard, and the rear aspect of many houses facing on the next street.

There was nothing in the outlook that gave him a clue to the locality he was in, as most back yards look more or less alike.

He turned to the door.

"I suppose it's locked and that I'm a prisoner," he thought.

He felt in his pockets and found that not only was the certificate of deposit missing, but all of his loose change, too.

Evidently the rascals had cleaned him out of everything of value.

He tried the door and found it locked as he expected.

Then he sat down and began to wonder why he was a prisoner.

Surely after the rascals had robbed him of everything of value they could have no further interest in him.

While he was considering the matter he heard two men ascending the stairs outside.

Thinking they might be the rascals coming to take a look at him, he lay down on the bed with the intention of deceiving them concerning his return to consciousness.

They did not enter his room, however, but the one adjoining.

He heard a match strike and then saw a gleam of light shoot through the keyhole of the door in the wall which connected the two rooms.

He got up and applied his eye to the small orifice.

The two men were visible to him seated at a small table scarcely more than a yard away.

They were Harding and Johnson, and they had removed their disguises, now that they were by themselves.

"We'll go to the bank as soon as it opens for business in the morning," said Harding, "and I'll draw the money on the certificate. I don't think there'll be any trouble getting it, as I can refer to our bank as reference, giving my name, of course, as Fitch," and Harding drew the certificate out of his pocket and looked at it attentively.

"Wouldn't it be better for you to turn the certificate in at our bank for collection?" suggested Jackson.

"It would if we were not pressed for time. If we turned it in we could not draw the \$10,000 out until it had been collected, and that would take another day, as it would have to go through the regular routine. Now, we want to get out of the city by the one o'clock Chicago limited if we can. The boy will recover his senses by morning, and Jerry will have to keep him here until a few hours after we have made our start. Jerry is not anxious to keep him any longer than is necessary, for it might make trouble for him, though he has a pretty strong political pull at his back. So you see time is a matter of importance to us," and the speaker folded up the certificate and returned it to his pocket.

"I agree with you. Our trunks are packed and ready to go. There is nothing to delay us but the collection of the certificate," said Jackson.

"That's right," said Harding, producing a cigar and lighting it, an example followed by his companion. "It is decided that we will go to Cincinnati first."

"Yes, it's a good town for us."

"Then we'll take in St. Louis and afterward Denver. Denver is my old stamping grounds, and we'll find plenty of good fellows there."

They talked awhile about their future movements, and then Jackson suggested that they go down to the bar and have a drink.

"All right. You go on and I'll follow you. I want to take a look at the boy and see how the drug is working," said Harding.

As Jackson started for the door Harding put out the gas and followed him.

"So he's coming in here. I must play possum," thought Bob.

He went to the bed and was lying down when an idea struck him.

"He's coming alone. The room is dark and he'll have to strike a light to look around. If I could surprise him, knock him out long enough to give me the chance to get my certificate out of his pocket and make my escape. Once on the sidewalk I'd be all right," thought the boy.

A boy of less nerve and resolution would probably have hesitated to tackle a big man like Harding, who was far stronger than he, for the chances of catching the rascal by surprise were problematical.

Bob, however, thought of the heavy crockery soap dish he had seen on the washstand, and figured that if he could bring it into contact with Harding's head he stood a good chance of stunning the man, and accomplishing his object.

Springing from the bed he seized the dish and squeezed up against the wall where the door, when it was opened, would conceal him from immediate discovery.

Hardly had he done so when he heard a key rattle in the lock, and then the door opened and Harding entered.

The room was not near so dark to Bob, whose eyes were accustomed to the gloom, as it was to Harding, who had just left a lighted room.

The man had no intention of lighting the gas jet, as the gleam of a match would answer his requirements quite as well.

He struck the match as he entered, and the glare dazzled Bob for a moment.

Fortunate, indeed, it was for him that the rascal's back was turned to him at that moment or his plucky purpose would probably have failed at the outset.

Harding, however, presented a fair mark for the missile Bob held in his hand.

As he glanced at the bed, and, finding it vacant, uttered an ejaculation of surprise, Bob flung the dish at his head, but with only force sufficient to stun the man.

Had he thrown the missile reckless of consequences the chances were he would have killed Harding on the spot.

The man pitched over against the bed with a groan and lay quite still.

Bob shut the door, then searched Harding's pocket for the certificate, which he found right away.

Having secured that important paper, he lost no time in getting out of the room.

"I'll lock him in and take the key with me," he thought, as he closed the door.

He did so, and then looking down the dimly-lighted stairs to the landing of the second floor, saw, to his satisfaction, that the coast was clear.

He ran down and paused at the head of the lower flight.

A gas jet burning in the entry showed him the street door.

There was no one in sight.

"Now is my chance," breathed the boy, and downstairs he ran.

He reached the entry without accident and laid his hand on the handle of the door.

At that instant a door on his right, connecting

with the bar-room, whence came a medley of sounds, opened suddenly and Jackson came out.

The rascal saw Bob and recognized him at once.

He gave a gasp of astonishment, and then reached for the boy.

Bob eluded his grasp, struck him a heavy blow in the stomach, which stopped him, and turning the knob of the door, flung it open and dashed out onto the sidewalk.

CHAPTER XII.

BOB DOUBLES HIS CAPITAL.

Bob lost no time in darting up the street toward what proved to be Eighth avenue, and inside of five minutes was safe from pursuit.

None, however, was attempted, as Jackson saw the futility of chasing him.

Bob kept on till he reached Seventh avenue, then he quit running, satisfied that he was safe.

He continued on to Sixth avenue, crossing Broadway, and made for the nearest elevated station.

Half an hour afterward he was home, where he found his mother and sister somewhat nervous over his failure to return to supper.

"Why, Bob, where have you been?" asked Nellie. "It is going on one o'clock."

"Well, I suppose I'll have to tell you the truth. I've been in trouble."

"In trouble!" cried his sister and mother in a breath.

"Exactly; but I managed to get out of it by the skin of my teeth."

"Do tell us what happened to you," said Nellie, anxiously.

"Yes; but have you anything to eat handy, mother? I haven't had a thing in my mouth since breakfast, so you may imagine I'm pretty hungry."

"Is it possible? I'll prepare you some supper right away," said his mother.

"Then we'll all go into the kitchen, and I'll tell my story there so mother can hear."

He began by showing the note he had received from the alleged Fitch, who, he said, was a crook named Harding, one of those connected with the robbery of Mr. Brown's house.

He explained how he had called at the office of Fitch & Bacon, and what had happened to him there.

"The next thing I remember was coming to my senses in a small room in a house which I afterward found was on — street, below Eighth avenue, he went on.

Then he told how he knocked Harding out when that rascal visited him, recovered his certificate of deposit, eluded Jackson, when he unexpectedly met him at the street door and made his escape.

"My gracious! How fortunate you were to get your certificate back," said his sister. "It would have been terrible had you lost all that money."

"I should say so," he answered.

His mother thought so, too; but she did not suppose

that the money was his, but presumed it belonged to Mr. Fitzball.

Bob had not yet taken her into the secret of his success in the market.

He ate his supper like a hungry boy, and it was half-past one by the time the little family retired to rest.

In the morning he went to Police Headquarters and reported the facts to the head of the Detective Bureau.

An officer was sent to Jerry's place, which was known to the police, but he could learn nothing about Harding and Jackson.

He afterward visited the office of Fitch & Bacon and found it shut up.

He made inquiries in the building about the two tenants, and finally remembering about the mysterious burglary which had happened on that floor, he began to have his suspicions about these two men, who Bob claimed to be crooks, by the name of Harding and Jackson, and he returned to Headquarters to report and consult with his superior.

The result was the office was taken charge of by the authorities, who found nothing in the room showing that any real business had ever been carried on by the alleged firm of Fitch & Bacon.

Other detectives were put on the scent, but the crooks were not caught.

The inference was that they had left the city, and the authorities of other large cities, particularly those in the West, were requested to be on the lookout for the two rascals.

It was about this time that Bob overheard Mr. Fitzball speaking about an anticipated rise in F. & G., owing to the fact that it was rumored that the line was to be taken into the Wabash system under very favorable conditions.

Bob immediately bought 1,000 shares of the stock, for he was fully satisfied he had got hold of a good thing.

A few days later his expectations were realized when the rumors were verified and the price boomed twelve points, earning a profit of \$12,000 at one clip for him.

He now told his mother about his successes, and handed her \$1,000 to put in bank for herself.

Nellie was doing fine in her own business, and not only had paid Bob the money she owed him for starting her, but had quite a surplus to fall back on if necessary.

She had work enough to keep two girls busy beside herself, and she told Bob one day that she guessed she never would get married unless her husband would agree before they were married to let her run her own business.

"Some fellows would agree right off the reel, and consider it a fine excuse to avoid working themselves," said her brother.

"Would they? If I ever take a husband he'll have to work without any reference to what I do. It will be his duty to support me, not my duty to support him. That will all be understood before I consent to change my name," she said in a tone that showed she meant it.

"He might go back on the arrangement."

"If he does he can take his traps and leave. I mean to be independent. I've seen too much of wives dependent on stingy husbands for the support grudgingly doled out to them. I hope to marry a real man, not an excuse for one."

"I sincerely hope you will, Nellie."

"Bessie Dale will get a real man when she marries you."

"How do you know she has any idea of marrying?"

"Because you call on her twice a week now, and you two wouldn't be so anxious to enjoy each other's society if you both didn't mean business."

"I'll admit, sis, that we're as good as engaged. I haven't asked Mr. Brown for her yet, but I mean to by and by. As I'm pretty solid with him, and he can't help seeing the way the wind blows, I don't think he'll turn me down."

Some weeks passed away and Bob, now worth \$21,000, saw no further safe chance to increase his capital.

After his experience with Harding and Jackson, he no longer carried any evidence of his wealth around with him.

He continued to keep his capital in the form of a certificate of deposit from the little bank, but it lay inside a sealed envelope, addressed to himself, in the big office safe.

It was secure there, and he could get it whenever he wanted it.

One night about this time Bob paid one of his usual bi-weekly visits to Bessie Dale.

The girl always looked for his coming, and would have been grievously disappointed had he failed to appear.

He never failed, however, for his heart was in her keeping, and nothing would have kept him away.

On this evening two men, bundled up to their throats in overcoats, the collars of which were turned up around their ears, for the night was not a pleasant one, had followed him from his house without him being aware of the fact.

One of them was tall and well-built, the other about medium size.

They looked like respectable citizens, but looks do not always tell a truthful tale.

They certainly did not in this case.

The two men were Harding and Jackson, who had ventured to return to their old haunts in New York.

They had not forgotten how Bob had turned the tables on them, and recovered his certificate of deposit, which they counted on cashing to their own advantage.

Men of their stamp always feel that it is their duty to get back at anyone who does them up.

At any rate such was the feeling that the two crooks entertained for Bob.

They couldn't rest satisfied till they got square with him.

They did not intend to do him any great bodily injury, but they were in hopes that he still carried a certificate of deposit, maybe larger than before about with him, and their purpose was to secure it if he had one.

If he didn't have such a desirable thing they would content themselves with cleaning him out of his watch and spare cash, for all was fish that came into the nets of those chaps, since they were above such a plebeian occupation as work.

It was their principle that the world owed them a living, and they set about collecting what they considered was coming to them in any way that seemed most easy of success.

So, as we have said, they followed Bob to the home of his sweetheart, and lay in wait for him to come out.

Bob was seldom able to tear himself away from his charmer much before eleven.

Even after he got started it took him fifteen minutes

generally to say good-night, between kisses, for the last time at the hall door.

Bessie appeared just as loath to have him leave, and helped along the delay in ways best known to spoony young ladies under such circumstances.

Harding and Jackson, waiting outside in the comfortable night air, growled over the long time that Bob put in at the house.

They had no doubt that there was a girl in the case, and they wondered if he intended to stay until midnight.

At ten minutes after eleven Bob issued from the house, and the two crooks saw a momentary flutter of muslin, or some other feminine material, at the door before it closed with a bang.

"Here he is at last," said Jackson.

"I see he is. I hope he's worth plucking. If he isn't I shall feel much disappointed," responded Harding.

A moment later they sprang upon him and pulled him down on the sidewalk so quick that the boy hardly knew where he was at.

"Utter a sound and you'll be a candidate for an undertaker," hissed Harding. "Hold on to his legs while I go through him," he added to his companion.

As Harding held on to Bob's throat with a good grip, the boy couldn't have uttered a sound to save his life.

He wasn't conquered, though, for all that.

While he didn't have much to lose, he objected to losing the little he had.

He was surprised to note that the men did not look like a pair of common footpads, but like persons much above such an occupation.

He couldn't see the face of the man who was nearest him, owing to his beard and turned-up collar, but though he had not heard of Harding for several months, he began to entertain a strong suspicion that his chief aggressor was that rascal.

Apparently yielding to the inevitable, to throw the man off his guard, he lay quiet till Harding began searching him.

Finding the boy made no resistance, Harding released his throat the better to hold him down.

Bob raised his right arm and gave him a punch in the pit of the stomach that took all the strength out of him for the moment.

The boy then pulled him over on the sidewalk, rose into a sitting posture and fetched Jack such a crack in the face as to cause that individual to release his grip.

Like an eel Bob squirmed free and was on his feet before the men recovered themselves.

He waited long enough to whack Harding in the jaw as he was getting up, and he started down the street at a speed that soon carried him out of danger.

CHAPTER XIII.

BOB SECURES A DANDY TIP AND MAKES A BIG HAUL.

Next morning he reported the occurrence to Police Headquarters over the office telephone, explaining his suspicions concerning the identity of the gentlemanly looking footpads.

A detective was sent out to look for them, and Bob went about his business as usual.

Before he went home he wrote a letter to Bessie, detailing his strenuous adventure of the night before, and the girl nearly had a fit when she read it.

He had said nothing to his mother or sister about the occurrence at the breakfast-table, but concluded to tell his sister at her office, for he kept no secrets from her, as he considered her the best sister in the world.

As soon as he was through for the day he rushed upstairs to call on her.

She was out, but the two pretty typewriters in her employ were busy at their tables.

They both nodded and smiled at Bob, whom they knew was Nellie's brother.

His good looks and manly qualities had made an impression on their susceptible hearts, and not dreaming that he already had a girl to whom he was practically engaged, they both tried their feminine witcheries on him in the hope that they might capture him somehow.

Bob was a good jollier with the girls, and he bestowed his smiles and talk on both of the young ladies without any partiality.

Finally he sat down at his sister's desk to await her return.

In doing so he accidentally brushed off on the floor a couple of type-written sheets that lay blank side up.

He hastened to pick them up.

In returning them to the desk he put them down written side up.

Carelessly glancing at them he saw that one was a filled-in contract for the leasing of a trolley line in New Jersey to the traction trust.

Interested by that fact he read it over, without considering that he was doing something he had no right to do.

The conditions of the contract were so favorable to the line that was to be leased that he saw great possibilities for himself in the knowledge thus accidentally acquired.

Suddenly recollecting that the sheets had been turned face down, he restored them to that position just as his sister entered the office with a bunch of work in her hands.

"How long have you been here, Bob?" she asked him.

"About ten minutes," he said, getting up so she could sit down.

"Well, I'm very busy so I can't entertain you," she replied.

"A polite hint for me to go, eh, sis," he laughed.

"That's what I mean," she smiled. "Anything special you wanted to say?"

"I only wanted to tell you about something that happened to me last night up in the Bronx which I didn't want to let mother hear," he said.

"What was it?"

"I was waylaid and knocked down by a couple of footpads."

"My gracious! Is that really so?"

"It is."

In a few words Bob told her the incident and then took his leave.

"So the Somerville Trolley Company is going into the combine at last," he thought as the elevator carried him downstairs. "There will be a boom in that stock when the

news gets out. I'd like to get hold of some of it, but I'm afraid it's already been gobbled up by the insiders. However, I'll try for it to-morrow. Sister would not tip me off because she was given the contract to do in confidence, and she is too honorable to let any secrets out of her possession. She must have done the work herself, for it would be too risky to trust an employee with such a valuable bit on inside information. Either of those girls might be cute enough to pass the news to somebody who could make use of it, and the fact might reach the ears of the person who gave sis the work and then her reputation in business would be hurt."

Bob went to lunch and then spent half an hour or more looking up information connected with the Somerville Trolley Company.

By that time it was nearly five, and he returned to his sister's office to escort her home.

She was surprised to see him back, for she thought he had gone home.

"I thought you'd gone uptown, Bob," she said.

"You see I haven't. I called to take you home."

"Did you? The honor will be yours in a few minutes as soon as I arrange a few matters."

"Take your time. I can wait your convenience."

Ten minutes afterward they left the office together.

When Bob paid his first visit to the Exchange next morning he found a chance to run up to the little bank and leave his order for 2,000 shares of Somerville Trolley stock.

He had some doubts about the bank's ability to secure that amount, and so he told the margin clerk to get him any part of 2,000 shares.

When he called in that afternoon after he had finished his work he found that the full 2,000 had been bought and was held subject to his order.

After that he kept close watch on the financial papers to see what developments were reported.

In a few days the rumor was circulated around the Street that Somerville Traction was to be leased by the traction trust.

The stock jumped five points right away on the strength of it, though the report was not officially confirmed.

After that the rumors continued to come out, and there was a good deal of business done in S. T., and it was soon apparent that the stock was uncommonly scarce.

This fact caused another stiff rise.

A week from the time Bob bought the shares they were quoted at twelve points above what he gave for them, and this represented a gain to him of nearly \$24,000.

The price rose three points more inside of the next two days.

Then came the official confirmation of the lease, and up the stock went more than ten points more amid great excitement.

Bob held on for a few days more, during which the stock rose three additional points, and then he sold out at a profit of \$56,000.

"Lord!" he exclaimed in great glee, "I'm worth over \$75,000. What will sis and mother say? Gee! I feel like a millionaire."

He felt like letting out a whoop, but restrained himself.

"Bessie will be so glad she won't know what to do," he

said. "I guess I'm well enough off to marry her if we were old enough to suit Mr. Brown's ideas. Well, I mean, now I'm started, to make a quarter of a million out of the market. I'm going to resign my job and devote my energies to the more profitable business of operating on the market."

Mr. Fitzball was out in California with his family, traveling for his health, and his business was in charge of his cashier, so to that gentleman Bob tendered his resignation.

"Why are you throwing up your job, Bob?" asked the cashier, in surprise.

"Because I'm going into business for myself."

"I thought you never intended to leave Wall Street?"

"I don't intend to do it."

"What are you going to do—take charge of the business you started for your sister?"

"No, sir; she can run her own business without any help from me."

"Then what are you going to do?"

"I'll let you know later. It's a secret at present."

"Well, I'm sorry you're going to leave us. I don't think Mr. Fitzball will like it, but, of course, he couldn't stop you if you have made up your mind. I wish you luck."

"Thanks, Mr. Gray. I've got \$75,000 capital, so I hope to get along."

Thus Bob cut loose from his career as a messenger

CHAPTER XIV.

A BIG RISK FOR BIG MONEY.

Bob rented a very nice little cottage up in the Bronx, and his mother and sister moved up there.

They found it ever so much better than a flat, and it was more convenient for Bob to call upon Bessie.

He now considered himself the boss of the house, for he paid the bulk of the expense of running it.

Bessie told her guardian how successful Bob had been in the stock market, and his opinion of the boy's smartness rose considerably on learning that the young man was now worth \$75,000, all made by himself.

Bob had nothing to do these days but stroll around the financial district and keep tab on the market.

For the next two months he made several deals, but they were not all successful.

The balance, however, was in his favor, for he found himself \$5,000 more ahead.

One morning he read in a mining paper that a new copper mine had been discovered in the Northwest.

The name of it was Almaden Copper.

The mine was said to be rich in copper, and the owners expected great things of it.

Bob thought he'd like to buy some, but when he made inquiries on the Curb he found that the mine had not yet been listed, and the brokers knew very little about it, or its prospects—nothing more, in fact, than they had seen in Western papers.

So Bob didn't bother any more about it.

One day when he got out of the elevator at the seventh floor where his sister's office was, he saw that a recently

vacated suit of rooms had been taken by a new tenant, and to his surprise the new name on the door was Almaden Copper.

On the following Sunday a page advt. appeared in a big daily setting forth the merits of Almaden Copper as a big investment for the public to get in on.

Bob read the advt. and was much interested in it.

Next day he called on the secretary of the company and had a talk with him.

Almaden copper was being offered at fifty cents a share, though its par value was \$10.

After thinking the matter over, Bob bought 20,000 shares of it, putting up \$10,000.

The public bought a good many thousand shares in small batches.

The advt. continued to be printed every Sunday in different papers, and it brought in many customers.

The mine, however, was not listed on the Curb, so it really had no speculative value outside of the office.

Bob called often on the secretary to learn when it would be listed, but the secretary could give him no definite information on the subject.

In the meantime he operated on the stock market with pretty good luck until his capital rose to \$100,000.

The rush to buy Almaden stock ceased, and Bob found that his invested \$10,000 was a dead issue.

He tried to sell the stock, but couldn't find a purchaser.

"I guess I've been stuck on a fake mine," he thought.

Finally one day he read in a Western paper that the Almaden property was for sale.

He called on the secretary of the company and asked him about it, but that gentleman had nothing to say.

He admitted, however, that the mine had not met the expectations of its owners.

"How about myself and the others who bought the stock?" Bob asked.

The secretary shrugged his shoulders, and that was all the satisfaction he got.

After meditating on the matter Bob determined to visit the mine and satisfy himself if it really was no good.

He started West at once, and in due time reached the district where it was located.

He found there was nothing doing.

Some machinery had been put in, and there was a quantity of ore on the dumps, but the mine appeared to have proved a bad speculation.

"I can say good-bye to my \$10,000," thought Bob, satisfied that the mine would never pan out paying ore.

While walking around the country looking at neighboring properties that seemed to be doing well, Bob met a broken-down prospector.

He got talking to him about the Almaden mine.

"There's millions in it if the owners only knew where to look for it," said the prospector.

"How do you make that out?"

"I know all about it."

"Why don't you go to the owners and sell your knowledge?"

"Because they've ruined me and I wouldn't put a dollar in their pockets to save their souls."

"Why don't you stand in with some capitalist and buy them out? They are willing to sell out for \$10,000."

"I would if I knew where to find an honest man; but I distrust all mining people. They've always done me."

"How would you like to go in with me?"

"Why, you're only a boy."

"I'm a boy worth \$100,000, and I've got \$10,000 more sunk in Almaden stock."

"Come with me to my shanty and I'll talk with you."

Bob went with him and the prospector showed him specimens of copper ore that made his mouth water.

"That came out of Almaden," said the prospector.

"Bring me a paper guaranteeing me ten per cent. of the profit and I'll show you where the real ore is."

An hour later Bob brought the paper to him.

Then the prospector took him to an old disused tunnel and they entered it.

They went many hundred feet under ground until they came to an abandoned hole where the prospector showed Bob ore on every side similar to the specimens.

"Buy out the owners and your fortune is made," he said.

"I'll think it over," said Bob.

He did, and the result was an arrangement with the owners for the purchase of the mine and control of the stock.

Bob bought the machinery and other material which the prospector had said was necessary.

It was shipped to the ground and work was resumed, but this time in the old tunnel.

The ore ran well for a time and then began to peter out.

Bob had to put more money into the enterprise to keep things going.

One day, however, the lead was recovered, and after that it proved plain sailing.

A new company was formed and Bob was elected one of the directors, and the directors elected him president and general manager.

The mine proved a great success, and when this was demonstrated, the stock was listed on the Curb at \$2 a share.

As Bob owned 151,000 shares out of an issue of 200,000, and as the company was indebted to him to the amount of nearly \$60,000 for invested cash, he considered himself worth a pretty tidy sum.

A year later he sold out his control of the mine for an even million, and soon after he and Bessie were married, and went on a honeymoon trip around the world.

Thus did fortune smile brightly on Bob Carson, and he never regretted "going the limit."

THE END.

Read "UP TO HIM; OR, RUNNING HIS FATHER'S BUSINESS," which will be the next number (257) of "Fame and Fortune Weekly."

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GOOD STORIES.

Good results are said to have been obtained in France from the feeding of sugar to overworked horses. Excessive strain and consequent exhaustion as a result of slippery roads were lessened in those animals which were fed sugar daily. Some horses rendered unfit for service by overwork were restored to normal strength by a liberal mixture of sugar with their feed.

"Bear fur has been so low in price the last few years that I have not tried to catch them if they would let my camps alone and keep out of mischief," writes a New Brunswick trapper. "But they quite often break into the camps and then I have to kill them whether the fur is good or not. If they do get in a camp butter and coffee seem to be their first choice, but they generally smash everything that will break and what they don't eat they will destroy, and if they once learn to break into a camp the only way to stop them is the trap or gun."

There is in the Postoffice Department museum at Washington probably the most complete collection of stamps ever gathered together, this collection being the main attraction to visitors to that building. One hundred thousand tourists are alleged annually to ask to see it and innumerable stamp collectors study it continually. The collection, which was gathered during years of research and endless work, contains every stamp issued by the United States, from the most common to the most rare, and in addition every extant stamp known to the world. The Postal Department values the collection at \$200,000, yet authorities state that it would bring almost double that amount if placed on the market.

Weight, 410 pounds. Length, 11 feet. These are the dimensions of the biggest sturgeon which has been caught in Puget Sound within the last six years. Living up to his reputation of never having let a fish get away from him, Capt. Pete Rae, in command of the Chlopeck's new schooner Rover, brought the big fish into port the other morning. It was caught in Deception Pass. Capt. Rae had to fight for his reputation as a fisherman before he landed the sturgeon. It took five men to accomplish the feat, and before the fish was on the deck two of the five had taken an icy bath and a third had been thrown to the floor so violently that he retired from the combat. His place was taken by the cook of the Rover, who delivered a telling blow on the fish's nose with a rolling pin, after which the task was easy. The sturgeon was found in the Chlopeck Fish Company's trap when the Rover's crew began to raise the spill.

His tail was lassoed and five men tried to drag him on to a flat bottomed scow. As soon as the sturgeon felt himself being pulled out of his element he thrashed the five men from one end of the boat to the other "as though we were the tail of a kite in a forty-mile gale," was the way Capt. Rae expressed it. As far as known the only bigger sturgeon caught in Puget Sound was pulled in at the Lummi Island trap six years ago. It weighed 450 pounds and measured 14 feet.

JOKES AND JESTS.

"I wish you would pay a little attention to what I am saying, sir," roared a lawyer at an exasperated witness. "I am paying as little as I can," was the calm reply.

At a public dinner one man gave his fork to another with the words: "Just stick that fork into that potato for me, will you?" His unneighborly neighbor did as he requested and left it sticking there.

Copy of a notice on the beach at a fashionable watering-place: "In the case of ladies in danger of drowning, they should be seized by the clothing, and not by the hair, which generally comes off."

The meanest man on record sent through a post-office presided over by a woman a post-card on which was written, "Dear Jack: Here are the details of that scandal." And then the rest was in Greek.

"Dearest," he asked softly, "do you think you can live on my income?" She looked up at him trustingly. "Why, surely," she answered, "if—if——" "If what, my own?" "If you can get another for yourself."

Shoe Dealer (to new clerk)—What size shoe does a woman with a No. 4 foot wear? New Clerk—A No. 4. Shoe Dealer—How do you sell her a No. 4? Clerk—By telling her it's a No. 2. Shoe Dealer—You'll do.

"Mister," said a small boy to the druggist, "give me a bottle of them pills you sold father day before yesterday." "Are they doing him good?" asked the chemist, looking pleased. "I don't know whether they're doin' father any good or not, but they're doin' me good. They just fit my new air gun."

The Scots man's view of good measure in whisky comes out pleasantly in the story of the man who was employed to cut grass on the lawn of a close-fisted old lady. She insisted that he must cut it very short, adding that one inch at the bottom was worth two at the top. He did it so well that she was moved to produce a whisky bottle and a tapering wine glass, which she filled about half full. "Fill it up, mem," requested John, "for it's no like the grass; an inch at the top's worth two at the bottom."

Although the little boy of a Philadelphia lawyer had talked several times through the telephone to his father, he had never gone through the formalities necessary to call his parent up. The first time the little chap tried it he took the receiver off the hook as he had seen others do, placed his lips to the transmitter and said: "Hello, Central! I want to speak to papa." "Number, please?" came from Central. "Singular," answered the lad, surprised at the question, but proud that his knowledge of the rudiments of grammar enabled him to respond.

WALLED IN ALIVE

By John Sherman.

"A young lady called at my office last fall and related the following case," said a celebrated detective.

"She introduced herself as Ethel Herbert, and said she was the daughter of a wealthy merchant recently deceased, who left her a handsome fortune, of which, as she was of full legal age, she had sole control."

"A year ago," she went on to say, "I was engaged to a young gentleman by the name of Howard Harrison.

"He was the one man in all the world whose wife I felt that it would be my happiness to become.

"I was assured of Howard's devoted love beyond the possibility of a doubt; but shortly after our betrothal Howard departed for South America, to be absent for some months.

"A year went by, and for three months—the last three—I had not heard one word from him, when suddenly he returned, and assured me he had written regularly, but had failed to hear from me.

"There was something strange in Howard's manner, and he seemed to have forgotten many little incidents in his past.

"I rallied him on the subject, and he assured me that, although he had kept the matter a secret, he had been very ill of a South American fever while absent, and that since he had recovered he had been troubled by lapse of memory, which was gradually passing away, however.

"Of course, I credited this statement, but I was thunder-struck one evening quite recently when walking in the grounds about my residence, for a surprising incident occurred.

"I was seated upon a rustic bench, beneath a great tree, about the roots of which a dense clump of shrubbery grew that quite concealed me from the path beyond, when I heard footsteps.

"I started up and saw my affianced husband, Howard Harrison, coming down the path from the house, while a strange-looking old man, clothed in rags, and carrying a heavy staff under his arm, who had come from the highway, had paused before him.

"I was about to rush forth, when the first words uttered by the strange-looking old man chained me to the spot:

"Ha! So I have tracked you at last. You left me for dead, but your blow failed to kill me as you intended it should. I recovered, and, as you see, I have found you."

"Howard Harrison's face became convulsed with rage, and he hissed:

"What do you want, Miguel? Why have you followed me all the way from South America?"

"I have followed you for vengeance. At first I resolved to kill you when I found you, for Miguel, the gold bug, never forgives a foe, or forgets an injury. But I've changed my mind now, and I shall let you live, but all your life long I will be your Nemesis, and you shall pay me gold—gold always—that I may live a life of ease and pleasure, and no longer risk my life in the counterfeiters' illegal trade, as I have done for years in South America, where you met me," replied the old man.

"Wretch!" exclaimed Howard Harrison. "They called you 'The Gold Bug' in South America, for that was the name there employed to designate counterfeiters, but they should have called you the gold fiend. But if you think to extort money from me you are at fault in your calculations."

"I am not. Listen, Howard Harrison, I know your terrible secret."

"What secret?"

"You know well."

"I do not."

"I say again you do. But stop. After all, you may be ignorant of all. Know, then, that I know that by your order an awful crime was committed in South America."

"Bah! you seek to trade upon my fears. Leave me, and if you ever dare to cross my path again I'll hand you over to the police. Go, I say."

"I will not. Hear me out; I'll sketch a picture for you. The dark, deserted cellar of an old monastery. It is midnight. A pale, senseless man, bound hand and foot, is dragged into the cellar by two swarthy ruffians, while a European or an American, with a torch in his hand, leads the way. That man is——"

"Stop!"

"Ah, ha! you see I know all."

"Heavens, were you a witness of that scene?"

"Yes. When you discovered me, as you were leaving the cellar with your hired assassins, you thought I had just entered, and you struck me down, leaving me, as I have said, for dead. But the truth was I was in the cellar when you entered it. I witnessed all that transpired there. I hold the secret of your awful crime, and if you refuse to yield to my demands I'll denounce you to the world as an——"

"Stop! For Heaven's sake don't speak that word!"

"Then will you pay me for my silence?"

"I will—I will!"

"Swear it."

"I do swear it."

"I want a thousand dollars now."

"I haven't that amount now. But have a little patience and you shall have all you ask. Listen and I'll explain. The crime you witnessed was my first step in the direction of obtaining a fortune I had sworn to possess. I am to be married to an heiress, the possessor of a million; keep silent until she is mine, and I will share her wealth with you."

"Are you telling me the truth?"

"Yes."

"I doubt you."

"You need not. Yonder mansion is the property of the heiress who is to become my wife. These grounds, all the property in this neighborhood are hers. You can easily satisfy yourself that I am telling you the truth, and that she is my promised wife. Do so, and if you are convinced of my truth in this, then all I ask is that you keep out of the way until I make her my wife. Will you do this?"

"I will. But I warn you, beware how you attempt to deceive me, for I am a desperate man, and I will kill you if it is not made to my interest to permit you to live. I will denounce you, and have your life besides."

"I will not deceive you. I swear to share with you the heiress' fortune if you keep my secret."

"Then I'll trust you for the present. And now give me what money you have, and I'll be off. But I shall watch you. You can't foil me. I'll be your living shadow."

"Here is money, now be gone."

"The strange old man took the money Howard Harrison offered, and departed.

"Cunning as you are, I'll balk your game. I'll have your life, and that before I've made the heiress my wife," mutters Harrison. Then he turned and retraced his steps to my house.

"I sank back, stunned by the awful revelation I had heard; I could not for the moment comprehend that it was a reality.

"It was all so like a terrible dream. But it was real."

"Now, sir, as a detective I apply to you to aid me.

"A terrible suspicion has taken possession of my mind, and that is that the man who returned to me as Howard Harrison is not the real Howard Harrison on whose trust and honor I would have staked my existence, but a clever impostor who closely resembles him.

"This mystery I wish you to solve, and if you find the man who calls himself Harrison is not the man to whom I engaged myself before he departed for South America, then I ask you to solve the secret of the fate of the real Harrison.

"Thus the young lady stated her case, and I confess that I was never more interested in a detective revelation.

"I gave her the desired promise.

"Miss Herbert," said I, "I promise to do all in my power for you."

"With this assurance she seemed satisfied, and she left my office.

"I spent several days in shadowing the man who called himself Howard Harrison, thinking that, probably, he would have a meeting with Miguel, and that by keeping him under close surveillance he would lead me to the man who claimed to hold his secret.

"The days passed.

"Nearly a week elapsed.

"Finally one night, as I expected he would, sooner or later, the man who called himself Howard Harrison met the strange old fellow who had followed him all the way from South America.

"I was present—unseen.

"They evidently met by appointment, for the first words of each told that the other had expected him.

"The rendezvous was an old deserted hovel in an obscure quarter.

"Well, I am here according to my promise, Miguel. What do you desire now?" asked Howard Harrison.

"I wish you to sign this paper."

"Thus replied the other.

"As he spoke he placed a document before Harrison.

"Harrison read it.

"His face grew pale.

"If I refuse to sign?"

"Then you will be denounced."

"Wretch!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Sign, I say!"

"I will!"

"He seized the pen. Hastily he affixed his name to the paper. Then Miguel snatched it. In triumphant voice he shouted:

"Now you are a self-confessed murderer."

"Harrison's face suddenly assumed a demoniac expression, and he leaped at Miguel's throat. But the old fellow was on his guard. He possessed wonderful strength, too. He hurled Harrison back. Then quick as thought a knife appeared in his hand.

"Hold!" he hissed, "or I'll kill you like a dog!"

"Baffled!" cried Harrison, and turning, he quitted the place in haste.

"Old Miguel placed the document Harrison had signed in his pocket before the latter assaulted him. In the struggle that followed the paper had fallen from the old man's pocket upon the floor, and presently old Miguel departed without discovering his loss. I glided forward. Stealthily I reached the spot where the paper lay. Quickly I secured it.

"When Miguel was gone I proceeded to read the contents of the paper. I was startled. The revelation it contained was a

horrible one. Harrison was indeed an inhuman wretch if that document were true.

"It was in reality a confession. Its contents were as follows:

"I, Dave Darrell, make the following confession:

"I have been for several years past a resident of Brazil, South America. While there, a year ago, I met one Howard Harrison, a young man from the United States, who is almost my living prototype. Mutually attracted by the remarkable likeness, we became acquainted.

"I won Harrison's confidence and esteem, and he told me all about himself. From time to time I gleaned the history of his past, until I was as well acquainted with the leading events of his life as he was himself.

"My next move was to find out his financial standing, and I discovered that he was poor. But he had confidentially told me that he was engaged to be married to an heiress upon his return home to the United States.

"I determined to return and marry the heiress in his stead. I therefore laid a plan to get Harrison out of the way. I was plotting for the heiress' fortune, and when I found that success demanded the sacrifice of Harrison's life, I did not hesitate. I engaged the services of a couple of desperadoes; and Harrison, when we had drugged him with a glass of wine, was hurried away at night to the crypt under an old monastery—and there, in a niche of the wall, we walled him up alive! As I was leaving the crypt I encountered a man whom I believed had been spying upon us, and I fell upon him and stabbed him, leaving him for dead. This man was not killed; but he lived to follow me to America, and to bind him to keep the secret of my terrible crime I have promised—ay, sworn—to divide equally with him the fortune I may win by making the heiress my wife."

"Thus the document concluded.

"It was signed 'Dave Darrell.'"

"At last I had discovered the truth regarding the fate of the real Harrison. I dreaded to tell Ethel Herbert. I knew the tidings would break her heart.

"I determined to arrest the assassin without further delay, and also to hold the man Miguel as a witness. I tracked them both to their respective abodes, and with the assistance of a brother officer I arrested them that same night. In the morning I repaired to the residence of the young lady, Ethel Herbert. At last I felt it to be my duty to tell her that I had obtained the evidence that her lover had been 'walled up alive' by the wretch who had impersonated his victim. I had gained the entrance of Miss Herbert's mansion, when I heard a step behind me. Turning, I came face to face with Howard Harrison.

"Good heavens! How could you have escaped?" I cried.

"Escaped!" he exclaimed, in tones of astonishment, while at the same moment Ethel Herbert appeared at the door. "Why, I have just this day returned from South America!"

"Howard! The real—my own Howard!" cried Ethel, and she sprang into his arms.

"The young man was, in truth, the real Howard Harrison. His story was quickly told. Recovering from the drug which Dave Darrell had administered, he found himself walled up in the crypt beneath the old Brazilian monastery; but, by the exertion of almost superhuman efforts, he dug his way out. Then the drug's after-effects made him ill, almost unto death's door, and as soon as he recovered he hastened to America and his lady-love."

"Dave Darrell died in prison, and old Miguel returned to Brazil.

"Harrison and Herbert became man and wife."

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